A Russian Journey

Proctor

Illustrated

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A

RUSSIAN JOURNEY

BY

EDNA DEAN PROCTOR

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

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ST. PETERSBURG.

ST. PETERSBURG.

See! From the Finland marshes there
'Tis grand St. Isaac's rears in air,
  Column on column, that shining dome!
And, just beyond its glorious swell,
'Tis the slender spire of the Citadel
Where great Czar Peter slumbers well
  All by the Neva's flood and foam,—
That lifts its cross till the golden bars
Gleam and burn with the midnight stars!

THE gray waste of the Baltic; a cold, cloudy sky and a wild wind blowing from the east. In the distance a colorless line, the flat, dreary shore, to which even the poor picturesqueness of Finland is denied, and where a few pale birches and sickly pines are all that unaided summer can coax from the wet and barren soil. Yet out of this bleak morass there began to rise spires and domes and columns, half revealed in the shifting light, and then, as the sun struggled through the clouds, mul-

tiplying and shining resplendent like an enchanted city evoked from the gloom of the wave. Was it Venice, fair and fascinating on the bosom of the Adriatic? Was it Amsterdam, solid and secure by the Zuyder Zee?

The wonder grew. Tall ships and laden boats thronged about us; great rows of stately houses lifted themselves to view; crowded streets opened on every hand; and while we were yet bewildered with this mingled poverty of nature and splendor of art, the steamer rounded into her dock upon the Neva, and amid drays and droskies and a noisy rabble of coachmen and porters, — some clad in sheep-skins, and all in loose, long wrappings, — we gained the wharf and knew that we were in the capital of the Czars!

What would those earliest founders, the impassioned, beauty-loving race, that, wandering westward from the banks of the Euphrates, saw the plain of Damascus glowing in the Syrian sun, and pitched their tents upon its paradise of green, — what would they have said to the site of the City of the North? — a swamp, a quaking bog, scarcely

above the level of the Baltic, almost within the Arctic Circle, frozen and snow-covered for five months of the year, and subject, with the coming on of spring, to fearful inundations. No marvel is it that with bitter murmurings and regrets the first inhabitants took up their forced abode in its streets still reeking with marshy damps, and trembling beneath the unusual weight imposed upon the oozy soil.

What is St. Petersburg to-day? A city of more than half a million people; covering thirty square miles; with broad, regular streets and immense squares lined with lofty buildings; the most signal triumph of human will over material obstacles that the later centuries have shown. Compared with the cities farther south, Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Christiania seem like overgrown villages. St. Petersburg is peer of the proudest — the Paris of the Baltic — an imperial Muscovite Berlin.

Yet it overwhelms rather than delights you. It is vast; it is amazing; but it is the domain of the Titans rather than of the Graces, and you look in vain for the charming and the picturesque. St. Isaac's Place and the open area in front of the Winter Palace need a grand marshaling of troops

or a holiday convocation of citizens to fill the void; and the finest street, the Nevski Prospekt, beginning at the Isaac Cathedral and terminating three miles away at the Monastery of Alexander Nevski, calls for an unending procession to enliven its centre and unite its northern and southern borders in one. For convenience on ceremonial occasions and for sanitary purposes this is well; but for beauty give me rather Genoa with its narrow, winding, climbing streets, where you may shake hands with your neighbor at the opposite window and see above a line of gleaming blue which is the sky — even the covered, crowded ways of Cairo, where balcony and lattice break the formal lines, and the varying panorama below offers perpetual entertainment to the stranger.

As to the architecture of the city, its churches and religious establishments have all that is Russian. The rest of the buildings are mainly constructed on classic models, and though often imposing from their colossal size and lavish decorations, yet appear incongruous under that leaden sky. The fine, smooth marbles of the Mediterranean peninsula are fit for fashioning into graceful temples and lovely, rounded forms; and nude and slightly

NICHOLAS BRIDGE AND THE NEVA.

draped figures upholding roof and dome are natural and pleasing where the landscape is steeped in the warmth and splendor of a tropic sun; but in this cold Russia why did they not rear of their dark Finland granite bold, irregular piles that would rise majestic from the marshy plains, and mould as caryatides and ornamental groups, Muscovites in their long sheep-skin coats, or Tartars clad in Astrakhan caps and belted caftans, or Samoiedes or Laplanders enveloped in furs? Every land for its own! If the architecture of St. Petersburg were thus individual and appropriate, it would be as attractive as that of Athens or Rome.

From the gallery of the dome of St. Isaac's Cathedral an excellent view is obtained of the city. About you it lies upon the dead level which, to the north, loses itself in the Baltic and the swamps of Finland; and, to the south, in the great plain stretching with slight interruption to the Crimea. The uniformity of regular streets is relieved by the river and the canals; by the trees which care has made to flourish in the unwonted soil; by the public monuments; by the tall fire-towers — conspicuous objects in every Russian city, with watchmen ready, day and night, to give the proper signals in

case of an alarm; and, most of all, by the golden and azure domes of the many churches and monasteries. The Neva, curbed by granite quays, rolls its clear, strong tide through the city from Lake Ladoga to the Gulf; and as you mark how sea and river dominate over the plain, you wonder at the magnificent boldness that planted the capital where it must perpetually defy wind and wave.

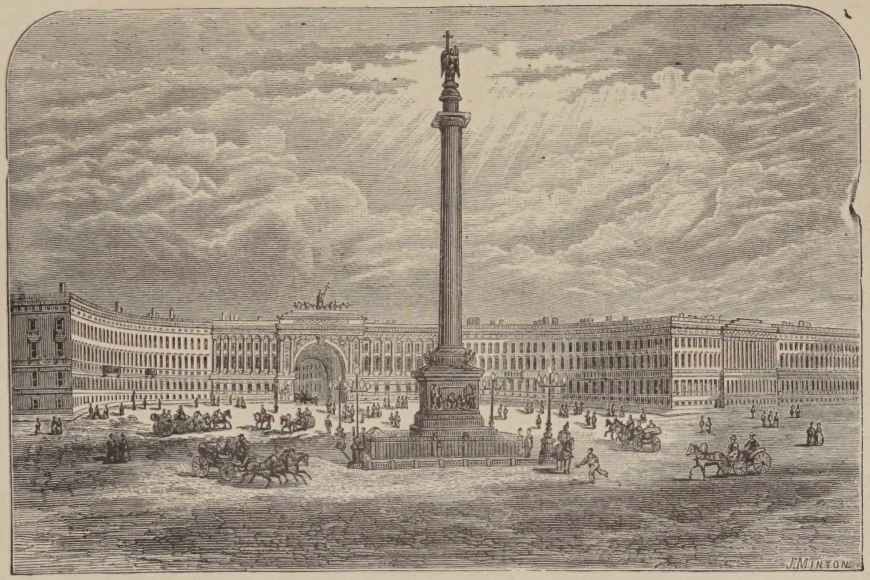
That slender gilded spire piercing the sky like a needle, and surmounted by an angel upholding the cross at a height of nearly four hundred feet above the earth, rises from the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, for the last century and a half the mausoleum of the royal family. Their white marble tombs, beginning with that of Peter the Great, are built up on the floor of the church, with a gilt cross resting upon the upper slab and an inscription traced upon the end; alike, save that on the corners of those of the sovereigns is blazoned the Imperial eagle — the double-headed Byzantine eagle brought to Moscow by Sophia, the Greek bride of Ivan the Great, and adopted by him as the emblem of Russia. The latest buried here was the eldest son and heir of the present Emperor, the Grand Duke Nicholas — the idol of his family and of the nation, and the

betrothed of the Princess Dagmar. Alas for earthly joy and glory! Death spoke to the heir of all the Russias as to the meanest peasant of the realm; and neither the soft clime of Italy, nor maiden's tender love, nor parent's yearning, nor an empire's devotion could avail; but, at the word, he must depart to that sphere where the person of kings is unregarded, and leave to his brother both bride and dominion! The walls of this cathedral are covered with banners and keys of conquered armies and cities, some of them lying even upon the tombs of the victors; and flying echoes from martial fields mingle with the prayers the priests intone for the repose of the dead.

The conspicuous building a little up the Nevski Prospekt is the cathedral of Our Lady of Kazan, named in honor of an image of the Virgin found unharmed among the ashes of a conflagration in the old Tartar city of Kazan, on the Volga, and now set with gems of fabulous value, and placed in the screen of this church, while above it the name of God is traced with similar precious stones. The screen itself — the partition between the nave and the altar — is of silver plundered from the churches of Moscow by the French, and retaken by Cos-

sacks to be here consecrated anew. This church is St. Petersburg's offering for the defeat of Napoleon, and to it the Imperial family repair for special thanksgivings. Here the grand procession halted at the entry of the Princess Dagmar, and while the crowd was hushed, and the impatient horses pawed the ground, the royal party entered, and a service of gratitude was performed for her arrival. Here, five years ago, came the Emperor, first alone and afterwards with his family, to give thanks for his escape from death at the hands of the assassin, Karokozoff.

At the end of the long avenue, that striking assemblage of domes and towers, is the third holiest shrine in Russia — the Monastery of St. Alexander Nevski, founded by Peter the Great. Alexander was a Prince of the race of Rurik, and his title, Nevski, comes from the battle he won on the banks of the Neva over the Swedes. The present Emperor bears his name, and is supposed to be under his special care and protection, as each Russian is under that of the saint for whom he is called. In this monastery lies the canonized prince for Russia's adoration, encased in solid silver, with silver angels hovering about him blowing trumpets



THE ALEXANDER COLUMN.

of fame. Much wealth in the way of jewels and rare manuscripts is gathered here, and so holy is the place considered, that, in recompense for the payment of a large sum to the monastery, many of the highest families have their burial-places within its walls.

Fronting the swift Neva, that huge pile half a mile in length with the handsome central spire, is the Admiralty, in which are the naval offices and schools. Beyond is the Winter Palace, the most spacious and splendid of the royal residences of Europe. That column in front is the Column of Alexander I., the largest monolith in the world; yet in the vast square its grandeur is lost, and you must stand beneath it in order to appreciate its size. Rows upon rows of piles were driven into the ground for its foundation, and Turkish cannon were melted down to form the capital and the ornaments for its base. But the frost deals hardly with its Finland granite, and each winter cracks and cleavages are made which cement and patches carefully repair. Everywhere groups and lines of birch and linden trees break the monotony, and, suggesting a firm soil, make you forget the bottomless bog which their deep roots penetrate; while

far away are the wide sea and the wider plain — the sea lit at Tornea by the midnight sun, and the plain washed on its southern verge by the warm waters of the Caspian.

ST. ISAAC'S AND THE CROWN JEWELS.

ST. ISAAC'S AND THE CROWN JEWELS.

Eye of a god was this blazing stone,
Beyond the snows of the Himalaya;
These dazzling stars might have lit the zone
Of the Queen of Jove or the Grace, Aglaia;
And the rubies are such as the Burman king
Sends his elephants white to bring,
With a troop of soldiers and high grandees
Greeting the finder, on bended knees.
Here's an emerald rare as the rose of pride
Cortez gave his Castilian bride,
And lustrous-green as the Indian gem
Charlemagne wore in his diadem;
And pearls hard-won by the Ceylonese
From the silent depths of the tropic seas,
While the conjuror muttered his spells ashore
Till the diver's toils for the day were o'er;
And crystals, amber and amethyst,
That only the Oural caves could harden —
Bright as blossoms the sun has kissed
In the fairy plots of a palace garden.

NEVER do I think of St. Petersburg without recalling St. Isaac's and the Crown Jewels.

St. Isaac's is the grandest church in Russia, and in all northern Europe; and if its magnificence of bronze and rose-brown granite had been fashioned into a Gothic instead of an Italian pile, it might, perhaps, have been the grandest in the world. The spot where it stands in the great square near the river was, from the founding of the city, designed for the site of the finest ecclesiastical structure. The present edifice was begun by Alexander I. and completed and dedicated with all the splendor of the Greek ceremonial a few years after the accession of the present Emperor. A million dollars were expended in sinking piles for its foundation, and untold sums have been lavished upon the cathedral itself. Built of Finland granite, in the usual Russian form of a Greek cross, at each of its four sides you ascend by three flights of massive steps — each flight cut from a single stone — to the four noble entrances, the pillars of whose porticoes are monoliths larger than those of the Roman Pantheon, and akin to the columns hewn by genii for the Syrian Temple of the Sun. The bases and Corinthian capitals of these columns are of bronze. Of bronze, also, are the groups illustrative of Scripture history and commemorative of apostles, saints,

Alexander II. came to the throne.

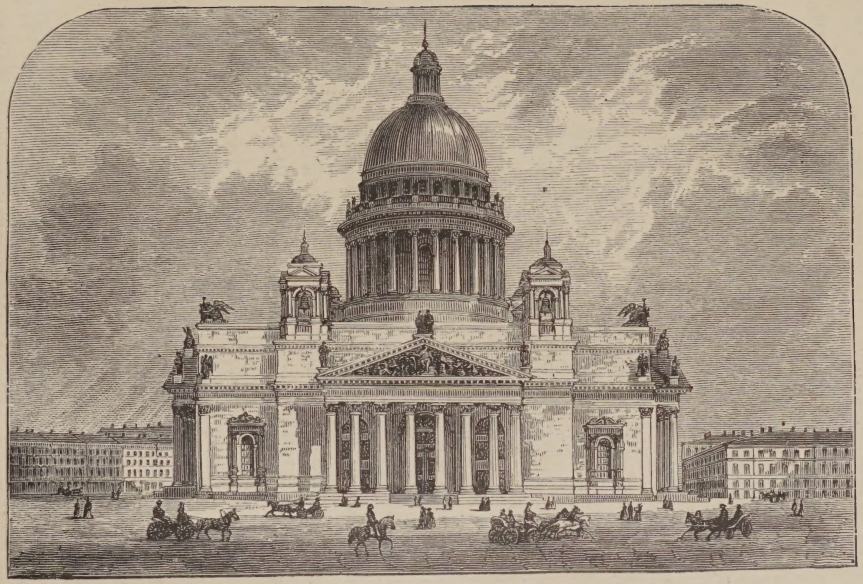
and martyrs, filling the pediments and ornamenting façade and roof, in rich harmony with the sombre back-ground; while the great Byzantine dome, encircled by smaller domes at the angles of the roof and supported by thirty granite pillars, lifts itself above the mass, overlaid with gold and surmounted by a golden cross, which, in fair weather, to those who miles away sail the sea or journey across the inland plains, shines like an unfading star. Within, all is gorgeous gloom. Perpetual twilight reigns under the lofty vault; and the lamps burning night and day before the sacred pictures help to interpret the wealth of mosaics and marbles and the splendor of the tall columns of malachite and lapis lazuli upholding the ikonastas interposed before the inmost shrine — their mingled tints of green and blue having the weird effect of an ice-cavern in the Alps or a grotto under the wave. The shrine itself is inclosed in a marvelous miniature temple of these precious stones, adorned with gold; while everywhere jasper and porphyry, and whatever rare and beautiful materials Russian quarries can furnish, are wrought into ceiling and floor. Artists may point to its over-decoration; architects may complain of the space and iron wasted in supporting the

dome; but in spite of critics and defects it must remain one of the superb buildings of the world.

With reverent faces the fair-haired, blue-eyed Russians are continually entering for their devotions. Purchasing a small wax candle from a table near the door, and advancing to one of the shrines, with prostrations and signs of the cross, they light the taper at the sacred lamp and place it in the silver stand pierced with holes; then, kissing the pavement, say a short prayer and retire, still looking towards the altar; while without, those who pass within the shadow of the dome, cross themselves and utter a pious ejaculation.

Magnificent Temple of the North is St. Isaac's. Yet with all its richness it is a saddening pile, dim and chill even in a summer noon, and fitted to inspire fear and awe rather than hope and love. God would speak to me more cheeringly on the broad steppe, beneath the open sky, with the wild east wind for anthem, than within these walls, massive as the Pyramids, and echoing chant and prayer of priest and devotee.

Whoever delights in jewels should seek admission to the Winter Palace. There, in a large room



ST. ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL.

on the second floor, guarded night and day by officers of the household, are preserved the glittering treasures of the empire. Most noticeable among them is the great Orloff diamond, surmounting the sceptre, the largest of the crown diamonds of Europe, and the gift of the politic, elegant, extravagant Count Orloff to the Empress Catherine II. Like the Koh-i-noor, it is one of the royal jewels of the East which, through misfortune and robbery, have passed into Europe. The English stone has been made into a brilliant, losing thereby nearly half its weight; the Orloff is rose-cut, as it came from India. Its size and light suit it to the sceptre of a realm like this, and until the Rajah of Mattam or some other Oriental monarch loses his state and his possessions with the advance of Western civilization, it will doubtless retain its proud preëminence. Yet for mere beauty I would choose rather the exquisite diamond called the Polar Star; or that lesser rose-tinted stone bought by the Emperor Paul for a hundred thousand rubles; nay, — since selection and fancy are so easy here, — I would even prefer that mystic jewel, the Shah, gift of Persia, with a Persian inscription upon its side!

The Imperial crown is a dome of diamonds

bound with pearls, its whiteness relieved by the red of an immense ruby which burns upon its top and supports a cross composed of five diamonds of wondrous brilliancy. The golden globe upbears a large sapphire shining with a light steady and cerulean as the heaven of the Mediterranean, while above it a limpid diamond rests upon the azure like a white cloud upon the sky. The coronet of the Empress is made altogether of diamonds of equal size and lustre — a diadem so dainty and dazzling that the most republican of women might be forgiven for being for a moment fascinated by a crown.

Besides these most noticeable things there is a long line of cases filled with jewels wrought into necklaces and bracelets and brooches and combs; into buttons and buckles and bows and rosettes; into girdles and plumes and fans and stars and eagles and orders; until the very profusion makes them seem common, and you become critical of gems as if they were but shells on the sea-shore, renewed with every tide. For centuries Russia has drawn upon the hoarded treasures of Turkey and Persia and India — region of jewels and of races that delight to wear them; and now the mines of Siberia have come to swell her stores. Nothing can

be more beautiful than some of the Siberian crystals here with their delicate tints, — green, rose, violet — for the setting of which the clearest diamonds have not been thought too costly.

Standing in this regal room you cease to wonder at the world's estimate of precious stones, and know why St. John fashioned of their splendors the walls and gates of the New Jerusalem. The dew-drop vanishes with the sun ; the rose, the pansy, and the lily droop and fall; clouds obscure the serenest blue; and it is only in moments of propitious light and air that we catch a glimpse of the rare green of the sea ; but the diamond, the ruby, the amethyst, the pearl, the topaz, the sapphire, the emerald, keep their charms imperishable, and gleam in changeless beauty beyond the reach of time.

The School of Mines displays a collection of minerals and stones only less valuable and beautiful than the crown jewels ; and these, with the great vases and urns of malachite and porphyry and jasper, classic in shape and faultless in finish, which adorn palace and hall, show Russia's wealth beneath the soil and the excellence of her lapidaries. The Academy of Sciences harbors the skeleton of the

huge mammoth found seventy years ago imbedded in an ice bank of the Lena, with its flesh so well preserved that bears and wolves came to feed upon it when the breaking of the cliff exposed it to view. And on every side is some institution which imperial power has dedicated to letters, or science, or art, and where you may while away a morning, oblivious of the world without. The old palace of the Hermitage is converted into an Art Museum and its galleries are adorned with some of the best pictures of every land, and with the marvels of ancient and modern sculpture. Rivaling these in interest are the antiquities from the Greek colonies on the northern shores of the Black Sea; vases and personal ornaments of exquisite workmanship, buried in tombs, and now, after two thousand years, brought to the light of day. One graceful painted vase bears the inscription, "Enrion has made it." Who was Enrion, the skillful Greek, charmed with his work and calling to us thus, out of the silence of centuries, to assure him of immortality? These noble collections are grandly housed, but the fine tracery of Grecian art and the impassioned creations of the great masters of Italy and Spain seem alien in this northern zone, and I fancied the

rapt and glowing Madonnas and the sunny landscapes would gradually fade and dim till they became pallid and misty as the light that fell through the lofty windows.

An imposing and yet a mournful summer city is St. Petersburg. Even when the sky is clear, the sun's rays are pale and subdued like those of late afternoon in our November; and though in its streets we saw peasants in their peculiar attire, and swift-driven droskies, and gray-coated soldiers, and long-robed priests, and heard on every side the rich Slavonic tongue; yet, remembering the saying of the Emperor Nicholas, "St. Petersburg is Russian, but it is not Russia," without regret we bid farewell to its splendors, and looked eagerly forward to Moscow.

TO MOSCOW.

TO MOSCOW.

Across the steppe we journeyed,
The brown, fir-darkened plain
That rolls to east and rolls to west,
Broad as the billowy main,
When lo! a sudden splendor
Came shimmering through the air,
As if the clouds should melt and leave
The heights of heaven bare, —
A maze of rainbow domes and spires
Full glorious on the sky,
With wafted chimes from many a tower
As the south wind went by,
And a thousand crosses lightly hung
That shone like morning stars —
'Twas the Kremlin wall! 'twas Moscow —
The jewel of the Czars!

BY the broad guage, arrowy railway, one dim afternoon, we left St. Petersburg for Moscow. On that wide level the city sank like a retiring fleet at sea, the high towers and domes of the Monastery

of Alexander Nevski lingering longest in the north-eastern horizon. For some miles, on our left, a straggling suburb extended south along the old post-road between the two cities. Gradually the houses became fewer, and at length we were alone in the great pine-covered plain.

Only the last of July, but already the summer approached its dissolution. Chill mists and vapors hung in the air, and every breath wafted showers of yellow leaves from the birch trees and filled the low pines with answering sighs. There is no sadder sound in nature than the wail of these Russian winds blowing straight from the wastes of ice and death that encompass the Pole — their force unbroken from the Arctic Sea to the Caspian, save by the forests through which they sweep with hollow, mournful tones that have in them some secret of eternity. The wind of the desert uplifts the soul; that of these northern steppes paralyzes it with fear.

Now, for the first time, we began to see the villages and hamlets of the former serf population, not yet changed under the new regime. Nothing drearier can be imagined than these log huts with a roof of boards and often but a single window,

poor sheds which seem dropped without the least order upon the bare plain. Though sometimes miles from any town, they had often no apparent shop of any kind, nor street, nor winding path, nor tree, nor shrub, nor window flower to relieve the hard monotony. The poorest Highland shieling has its gorse and heather and its mountain setting; for the Irish cot there is the little garden and the encircling green; over the mud hut of the Egyptian the palm waves its plumes; but neither nature nor art cheers these mean abodes which subserve only the rudest necessities of existence. Enter them and you see but a few clumsy articles of furniture of the peasant's own manufacture, with nothing to raise the thoughts above groveling cares but the little picture of the Madonna or some patron saint hung high in the farthest corner of the room, before which a lamp is suspended and kept, if possible, always burning, and to which all the events of the humble household are made known. Yet as the prison captive finds a world of delight in the unfolding of a tiny flower or the weaving of a spider's web, so, doubtless, even here the loving human heart sees much to make life sweet and desirable.

The Petersburg and Moscow railway was built without the slightest regard to important towns between the two places. From end to end its appointments are noble and uniform. The station-houses are handsome structures, built of brick, while about them are carefully kept grounds, filled with trees and plants adapted to the country. In the appartment next us was the Grand Duke Constantine going to Moscow, a man with the stately, florid beauty of the Romanoff family. Wherever the train stopped the soldiers of the adjoining barracks were drawn up on the platform to receive him, still as statues, their right hands raised in the military salute as he appeared and passed them in review. How can men become so automatic, a hundred moving absolutely as one? It seemed impossible that separate human hearts beat beneath those gray caftans.

To the cloudy afternoon succeeded the long twilight which is the night of the northern summer, and through it we held our way southward, over the lonely, forest-dark plain. At five o'clock the next morning we crossed Europe's great river, the Volga, at Tver, where its navigation begins, and from whence you may sail to distant Persia. Here, two hundred miles from its source in the

PEASANTS OF THE PROVINCE OF ST. PETERSBURG.

only elevations of central Russia, the Valdai hills, it is a shallow stream some six hundred feet in breadth, flowing with a calm current, and as if quite unconscious of all the tribes and territories its waters must greet before they find the sea. The boats and barges which crowd it show the importance it even here attains as an avenue of commerce. Tver rises picturesquely on its right bank, an ancient town famous in the past for its invasions by Poles and Tartars, and for the murder, in its convent, of the Metropolitan Philip; and in the present, for its manufacture of nails from the iron of the Ourals.

Advancing day revealed an atmosphere undimmed by the fogs of St. Petersburg, and through which the sun shone with warmer ray. Fields of rye and barley began to gain upon the fir-woods; the grass was greener; the trees taller; the monotony of the vast plain relieved by marked undulations; and at length, — like Madrid shining in the morning sun as you approach it over the wind-swept table-lands of Castile, but far more glorious, — before us rose an assemblage of brilliant white walls and of glittering domes and towers, and we were in that Asiatic city planted on the steppes of Europe, "Holy Mother Moscow!"

THE SHRINES OF MOSCOW.

THE SHRINES OF MOSCOW.

Above each gate a blessed Saint
  Asks favor of the skies,
And the hosts of the foe do fail and faint
  At the gleam of their watchful eyes;
And Pole, and Tartar, and haughty Gaul,
Flee, dismayed, from the Kremlin wall.

Here lie our ancient Czars, asleep. —
  Ivan and Feodor,—
While loving angels round them keep
  Sweet peace forevermore!
Only when Easter bells ring loud,
They sign the cross beneath the shroud.

O Troitsa's altar is divine, —
  St. Sergius! hear our prayers!
And Kiëff, Olga's lofty shrine,
  The name of "The Holy" bears;
But Moscow blends all rays in one —
They are the stars, and she the sun!

THE story of Moscow is written on its streets and walls. Every roof and dome bears the impress of Tartar domination, and the dark faces

among its fair Muscovite crowds show that the Asiatic still lingers in the long contested land. Its dwellings, white or pink or yellow, green-roofed and encompassed with gardens; its palaces and conventual piles; its churches with lofty towers filled with bells; its numberless domes and cupolas, gilded, silvered, enameled, — each upholding above the crescent a cross of gold attached by shining chains of filagree work, — and, high in the midst, the strange gateways and battlements and spires of the Kremlin, make up a Christian, Mohammedan, wondrous whole, more impressive for the solitary waste which encircles its grotesque, yet unrivaled splendors.

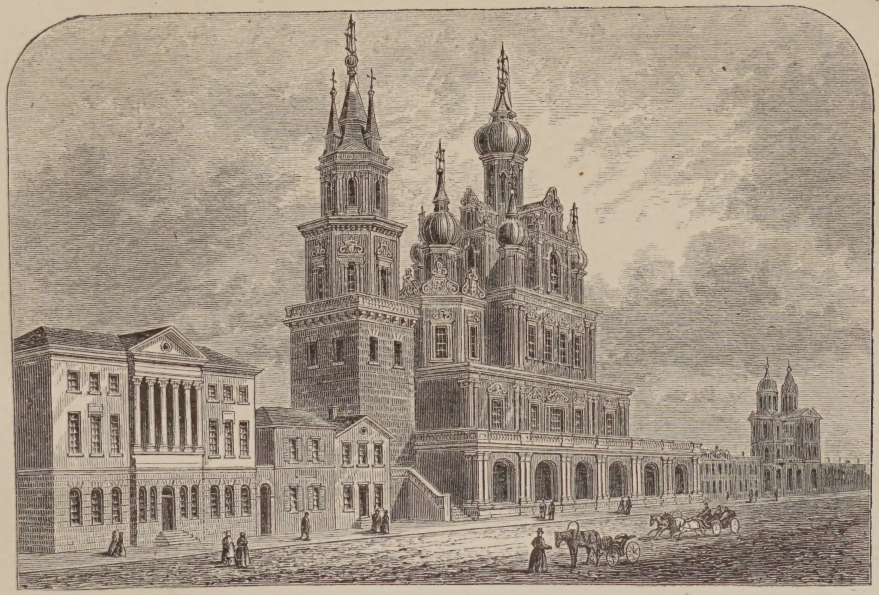
The Kremlin is both fortress and altar; the religious heart of Russia; the place of her holiest shrines and the deposit of her proudest trophies. About it the streets of Moscow range themselves as those of an English cathedral city do about the minster. Triangular in shape and somewhat over a mile in circumference, it rises on the elevated bank of the Moskwa, quaint, and grand, and indescribable. Massive stone walls — now surmounting an elevation, now dipping into a ravine — close it round, irregular, bold, and fanciful in design, pierced

by gates and overhung with towers. The most famous of these is the "Redeemer Gate," near the middle of the eastern wall, built by a Milanese the year before the discovery of America. Above it hangs an adored picture of the Redeemer of Smolensk, at sight of which (so says tradition) the awe-struck Tartars, in their last invasion, turned away from the fortress, while, a century later, the Poles fled before it when it was borne by Pojarski to the battle-field; and ever since, for these gracious interpositions, all who enter, Czar as well as peasant, bare their heads and cross themselves in devotion. Next in importance is the Nicholas Gate, with its picture of St. Nicholas of Mojaisk, who abhors lies, and in face of which, in old days, oaths were administered to contesting parties. Over it is written the proud inscription of Alexander I., that Napoleon's order to destroy this gate was only effectual in cleaving the tower at its base, while neither the glass of the picture nor its hanging lamp were broken. The moat which once encircled the walls is now transformed into gardens planted with trees and shrubs and flowers, and thronged with pleasure seekers during the warm evenings of the fleeting summer.

Perhaps the best point from which to view the

Kremlin is at its southwestern angle, on the stone bridge across the Moskwa, in the late afternoon. There it rises before you, stately with domes and towers; defiant with battlements and turrets and lance-like spires; gay with golden pinnacles and roofs of green and azure, and bearing aloft its glit tering crosses like lines of fire against the sky. Last summer, in the high Rocky Mountains, before an assemblage of unusual jagged peaks, and bare, regular walls, suddenly the setting sun broke from the clouds and lit up the whole range with glory. The snow-masses were dazzling in their whiteness; the ravines lay in blackest shadow; each crag and splinter was bathed in crimson light; the pines stood in intensest green, and, beyond, many a lofty projecting point shone like a star. Memories of Moscow came vividly back, and, enchanted, I said, "It is the Kremlin of Colorado!"

Although St. Petersburg is the residence of the Czars, the most important events of their lives are solemnized in the Kremlin of Moscow;—crowned in the Cathedral of the Assumption; wedded in that of the Annunciation; buried, until the time of Peter the Great, in the Church of the Archangel Michael. The Cathedral of the Assumption is the



CATHEDRAL OF THE ASSUMPTION.

Russian Holy of Holies, adorned with the oldest and most sacred pictures and containing the tombs of the famous patriarchs who have officiated there. Solidly built of stone, the plainness of its exterior is only relieved by the five golden domes; but within there is no space which is not covered with paintings or mosaics on a gilded ground, — the most precious set with costly gems, — and so unchanged is it by the lapse of time that the most conservative sects of the Orthodox Church can worship here undisturbed by heretical innovations. Every Easter, when the huge bell of the adjacent tower sends its summons abroad, they crowd its court-yard and its narrow but lofty nave, and prostrate themselves as before an unpolluted shrine. Through the doors of its silver screen, the Czar at his coronation, after reciting, as Head of the Church, the Orthodox Confession of Faith, and praying for the empire, enters the sacred place and takes the consecrated bread and wine from the altar in the holy communion. From this priestly act the doors of every church screen throughout the land bear the title of "Royal."

Yet, like most Russian cathedrals, its interior is oppressive in its gloom. The incense-laden air,

tempered by no artificial heat, is always chill. The sun falls obliquely through the high windows, and in the lower dimness the lamps burning before the sacred shrines seem like twinkling stars. There is scarcely light enough to display the patriarchal tombs — the mummied hand of the Metropolitan Philip exposed for the kisses of the devout — the jeweled pictures of the screen behind which no woman is allowed to pass, and which rises, massive and high, as if to bar the soul from more intimate communion. The martyrs stare with hard, fixed features from the square, gilded pillars that uphold the dome, and madonnas and saints, with the same faces here as everywhere from Abo to Odessa (for no departure is allowed from the old Byzantine models), look out meagre and sombre and grim from their imprisoning frames.

Two things lighten the solemn melancholy of the service — the equality of classes, and the music of the chants and responses. Here are no pews or privileged seats, but high and low bow side by side before the altar, the costly furs and velvets and rich shawls of the nobles brushing the worn felt and ragged sheep-skin of the serf. The old Greek chants are employed, rearranged in the last century

by Italian masters, but retaining their noble simplicity; wholly vocal, yet so pure, so sweet, so harmonious, that they float through the gloom like songs of seraphs ministering to souls in prison. I shall never forget a vesper service in the church of the Kremlin Convent of the Ascension — the devout, silent crowd, the priest in his blue tunic and long fair curls making the round of the sacred pictures with incense and candles, and the celestial warbling of the nuns in an adjoining chapel, high and clear as if with the sound their souls were exhaling to heaven!

On the site of the old residence of the Czars in the Kremlin, the Emperor Nicholas erected a marble palace crowned with a gilded dome, its white mass conspicuous from every point of view. Its interior is singularly splendid, from the great hall used only for the banquet given by the emperor to the nobles, after his coronation, to the private apartments for the royal family during their visits to Moscow. All that remained entire of the old palace was incorporated with the new, the most important relic being the "Red Staircase" leading to the Cathedral of the Assumption, and connected with many notable events in Russian history. It

was up these stairs Napoleon strode to take possession. Ah, could he but have looked forward fifty years, and seen that the only trace of him there would be the pictures on the walls portraying his defeat! But there was no wizard to give Lochiel a warning.

In the treasury adjoining, are gathered the trophies and mementoes which invading armies and ravaging fires have left to Russia. Here are the standards of the ancient Czars; captured colors — the pride of Turkey and Persia — and the banners borne to the conquest of Siberia; the coronation robes and thrones and crowns and sceptres of the Russian royal line, and those taken from the kings who have submitted to them — of Kazan, of Poland, of Astrakhan, of Georgia — with countless other things illustrative of the past, and valuable for richness of material or association. The Church Treasury, in the House of the Holy Synod, close to the Cathedral of the Assumption, is filled with superb ecclesiastical relics — robes and mitres thick set with pearls and precious stones, gems engraved with sacred subjects, and worn by bishops on a chain about the neck — and, most interesting of all, the silver vessels for the preparation of the holy oil of

baptism, mingled here during Lent by the metropolitan and his associate clergy; composed of the purest wines and oils and spices and balsams, and sent hence to each bishop in the empire. Every church is consecrated with it; every communicant (and all Orthodox Russians are communicants), from Czar to peasant, is anointed with it in baptism. A small, curious flask is still preserved here, in which it is said the first oil was sent to the Russian Church from Constantinople. The soft-voiced monk in black robes, who was in attendance, took up this flask with the utmost veneration, and told us how every year a few drops were poured from it to sanctify the new chrism, and an equal quantity of the fresh mixture returned, so that it remains always full.

The treasure-rooms of Russia make jewels seem valueless through abundance. You would hardly be surprised if at length you were shown an apartment blazing from floor to ceiling with rubies and diamonds. And these riches are but a part of the wealth and glory of the Kremlin. Every stone has its memories; every room has its relics; and all are consecrated to patriotism and to religion.

Just outside the Redeemer Gate of the Kremlin stands the most picturesque edifice in Russia, — that conglomerate of rainbow domes and towers, — that tulip of architecture, — the Church of St. Basil. Erected in the sixteenth century to commemorate the taking of Kazan, it is the wildest dream of a mosque, except that for the light, airy spaces of the Arab structures, there are the heavy walls and the gaily-painted, dungeon-like chapels of the Muscovite north.

Rivaling the ancient edifices in splendor and interest is the Temple of the Saviour, on an elevated position above the river and a little southwest of the Kremlin. Built in memory of Russia's triumph over the French, it was begun the very year of their invasion, and it will be yet some years before its completion. The site originally selected was upon the hills from whence Napoleon had his first view of the city, but the ground was not firm, and it was removed from thence to its present locality. It is constructed of a light stone, in the simplest form of a Greek cross, and — what is rare in a Russian Church, where statues are forbidden, and anything in the form of sculpture is unusual — it is

adorned on the exterior, for half its height, with well-wrought bas-reliefs of scenes from Scripture and from Russian history, appropriate to the event it celebrates. Its golden Oriental domes are far more beautiful than the smoothly rounded ones of St. Isaac's, and the crosses which surmount them are not of the Latin type, but such as are found on the early churches of the Empire, with three transverse bars, according to the tradition which makes the cross of Christ to have been fashioned of cedar, and palm, and cypress, and olive. Over the entrance is the watchword, "God with us," and within, the Temple is massive with rich marbles, conspicuous among them a dark-veined, lustrous stone from the Crimea. Blent with Christmas ceremonies, how grand will rise beneath this roof, the thanksgivings of the nation for deliverance from the foe! One might well cross the sea and the steppe to listen here to the words with which the service opens, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!"

When we saw the cathedral, workmen were busy quietly fitting and polishing the costly blocks, —tokens of Russia's patriotism and devotion,—and on the grassy space without, bluebells and butter-

cups nodded in the wind beneath the shadow of the great dome, and the Moskwa rippled calmly below as if neither invader's foot nor clash of arms had ever disturbed their tranquillity.

And this is the end of Napoleon in Russia.

MOSCOW BEYOND THE KREMLIN.

MOSCOW BEYOND THE KREMLIN.

O the splendor of the city,
When the sun is in the west!
Ruddy gold on spire and belfry,
Gold on Moskwa's placid breast;
Till the twilight soft and sombre
Falls on wall and street and square,
And the domes and towers in shadow
Stand like silent monks at prayer.

'Tis the hour for dream and legend:
Meet me by the Sacred Gate!
We will watch the crowd go by us;
We will stories old relate;
Till the bugle of the barracks
Calls the soldier to repose,
And from off the steppe to northward
Chill the wind of midnight blows.

MOSCOW is full of interest outside of Kremlin and church and palace. Its situation is high and healthful, and its half million inhabitants are spread over an area greater than that of

any other European city except London. It is the largest manufacturing town in Russia, — having within its walls and suburbs nearly two hundred factories for the weaving of silk alone, — and when more railways have penetrated the East, it will be the mart of exchange for Europe and Asia. Its nobles follow the court to St. Petersburg. Merchant princes are taking their place.

On reaching the city we established ourselves, after trying the pretentious "Hôtel Dusaux," at the house of Mr. Billot, which we found very comfortable. The landlord, a gentlemanly Swiss, had what seems to be thought a necessity here, a little place out of town, where he spent every night, returning in the morning with spotless linen, a flower in his button-hole, and bouquets for the rooms, from his own garden. We sometimes dined at the public table to see the varied company assembled there, and had occasionally striking proofs of the union of countries and races, to which the world is tending. One day a man extolled to his neighbor, a London merchant, "the delicious pumpkin pies of New England." He was a Tyrolese, who had been in this country as the leader of a band of singers, and in the same capacity was then on his way to Nijni.

At another time, a Hungarian, who had spent several years in America as a political exile, narrated a sharp story of a New Hampshire man's evasion of the Maine Liquor Law. It excited such laughter in those who understood it, that he was pressed to repeat it in Russ, which he did, and afterwards in Italian, in French, and in German. Its sly Yankee humor appeared to be as much appreciated by all these people, as it would have been at home. A stout Nuremberger laughed till he seemed on the point of apoplexy, and the Italian cried "Bravo!" till the ceiling rang.

From this house, which was near the Kremlin, we explored, at leisure, the city and its suburbs. Nothing can be more entertaining than that labyrinth of shops, the Great Bazaar, in whose long arcades each trade has its quarter; none among them more inviting than that devoted to jewelers and silversmiths, whose shelves and counters shine with the crystals and gems of Siberia and India, and with articles of the exquisite niello work peculiar to the country. At each merchant's right hand was seen a small frame filled with ivory balls, strung on wires, by which he reckoned his accounts, and perhaps standing near it was a glass of tea. Scarce-

ly less attractive is the Riadi, an open bazaar, the centre of the traffic in wax tapers, sacred pictures, and the lamps which burn before them. When one remembers that no Russian room, whether in hut or palace or place of public resort, is complete without its holy picture hung high in the farthest corner, it explains these piles upon piles of Madonnas and heaps of saints and apostles, framed in every form and fashion to suit varying tastes and means. Then there is the Fair held on Sundays in the street, — the bazaar of the poorest classes, where every variety of trash spread over rude tables or upon mats on the ground, finds a market, and where, if you mingle with the crowd, you must be careful not to press too near to the peasants lest you should take home with you some of the vermin of which their greasy sheep-skin coats are often full; for the bath that must always precede their church communion, does not extend to their clothes, which are worn without washing, night and day, for months and perhaps years, until they become rags, and are exchanged for new.

The tea-houses with their white-robed attendants who serve the delicate overland tea — to the ladies in cups, to the gentlemen in deep glass tum-

blers — with a slice of lemon dropped into it instead of cream, are a novel feature of the city. To these quiet tables, with their fragrant beverage, come friends for genial talk; buyers and sellers to consummate their bargains; civilians and soldiers to discuss politics and promotion, and all classes for recreation and cheer. The finest tea here costs about ten dollars a pound, and a leaf or two will make a full cup. When drawn it is of a faint amber color and has a delicious aroma. Hot tea is sold about the streets in winter as lemonade is in summer. When sugar is used it is not dropped into the cup or glass, but the lump is held in the hand and a bite taken now and then — an inconvenient way, for the fine-grained, solid beet-root sugar is as hard as a stone.

Most of the Tartars here are in a menial condition and employed as coachmen and servants. Many families are, however, of mingled Tartar and Russian blood. Several of the churches in the city might seem to have been reared for the worship of "the Faithful" if only on the swelling domes the crescent replaced the cross, and from the high towers the bells were removed to make way for the muezzin calling to prayer. But the rule of the Prophet

is over. There is but a single mosque, at the extremity of the city — a poor, plain affair where the few Mohammedans gather meekly to their devotions, in mockery of the day when the Duke of Muscovy went forth to meet the Tartar ambassadors, spreading a mat of rich sables for their feet, presenting them with a goblet of mare's milk, — the wine of the Mongol steppes, — and humbly licking up the drops that fell on the manes of their fiery horses!

The great Foundling Hospital, established by Catherine II., has, as one source of its revenue, the profits derived from the government manufacture of playing cards — no inconsiderable sum, for card-playing is almost universal. The girls brought up here are, at a proper age, shown on certain days to visitors. Five kopecks a week are laid up by the state as their dowry. They are often pleasing and well educated, and are frequently chosen for wives by the lesser merchants, as they have no troublesome relations.

Yet neither cathedral nor bazaar nor hospital has more charms for the stranger than the out-door life of the city. The streets are of varying width; crooked, paved with sharp, flinty stones, and lined with buildings of every style of architecture.

Churches, palaces, and the pink or yellow white-washed cottages of peasants are jumbled together, and from whatever point you look some picturesque group of domes and towers delights the eye, or perchance down the vista you catch a glimpse of the Kremlin wall. Through these avenues pours the varied population. Princes pass in their swift carriages, and perhaps the Metropolitan, hidden in his stately coach drawn by sleek black horses of noble breed; merchants dash by in their droskies — men, it may be, of enormous wealth, and whose transactions are now with Paris and now with Pekin; drays and country carts lumber along, driven by peasants with wide trousers tucked into high boots, or tied with a string — their feet encased in shoes made of plaited reeds or strips of lime-tree bark ~~— a blouse-like shirt of pink calico, (why, with their florid faces, they should choose pink, I cannot understand) over the trousers,~~ confined at the waist by a sash or a belt of leather, and above this, unless in heat of noon, a wrapper of sheep-skin reaching below the knees — while often there is no covering for the head but the yellow, matted hair, bound with a fillet and falling low on the shoulders as the full beard falls on the

, fashioned by themselves in the long winter evenings — a blouse-like shirt of calico, often pink in color, ~~for the trousers~~ the trousers and worn outside

breast. In the open spaces stand the coachmen with their vehicles waiting to be hired — dressed in low, broad-crowned, black hats; long caftans of dark cloth fitting close about the neck but without a collar, padded at the hips, double in front and fastened under the left arm with six metal buttons; while their thick white gloves, when not in use, are secured by the thumbs to their girdles. Men carry about buckets filled with salted cucumbers, selling them, one by one, to the peasant crowd as a relish for their black bread, which they eat as they go. At the churches and the street shrines of the Virgin, passers-by make the sign of the cross and even prostrate themselves in their reverence. Nurses appear clad in the Russian national costume — a white under-garment, rather low in the neck, with full, short sleeves; a dark skirt gathered into a band just above the bosom and suspended by straps over the shoulders, and a belt about the waist from which depends a long white apron. Earrings and a necklace of beads are worn, and on the head a high, turban-like cap of some bright color. This striking but rather formless attire, seems now to be given over to nurses, and court ladies for state occasions, when the head-dress blazes with jewels. Mer-

DROSKY

chants' clerks, when not busy, may be seen sitting in the shop doors playing chess or dominoes and perhaps holding a pet cat the while. Loads of birch wood go by, ~~sold at twenty rubles a cord — a large sum for the~~ peasants; but a little wood lasts them long, as their brick ovens are not allowed to cool and air is excluded. Soldiers conscious and unbending in their uniforms are always in view, and the dark faces of Gypsies, Tartars, Persians, and Jews are a pleasant relief after the fair monotony of the average Russians. Why is it that the men of the Slavonic family are so much comelier than the women? Handsome men abound, and doubtless there are lovely, graceful women here, but they are rarely visible in church, or street, or bazaar. I saw only one or two who could be called beautiful, but they showed the possibilities of the race — dainty creatures with the lily complexion, blue eyes, and blonde hair, which we ascribe to angels; the type, perhaps, of the Anastasias and Natalies whom the early Czars chose out of all the land to share their throne. The women of the lower classes, with their flat features, and hair and eyes and skin of much the same hue, have ordinarily nothing but an honest, good-natured

expression to redeem their round faces from positive ugliness. They wear loose boots, short skirts, long sacques of wadded cloth or sheep-skin, tie a thick handkerchief over their heads, and at a little distance look so much like men that you can hardly tell whether you are gazing at Ivan or Nadia.

These shifting scenes through the day; but if at dawn a trumpet blast should wake you, and, rising, you should look from your window, you would see a different sight, — a mournful procession threading the yet quiet streets, — first a mounted police officer, then a trumpeter, then a company of soldiers, and lastly a high cart drawn by four horses abreast, and on its top, in convict garb, a criminal who is to be thus exposed for three successive mornings and then set out on his long journey to Siberia. They round the corner; the brazen notes ring out again; the Cossacks close their line and the poor wretch hangs his head as he disappears. Melancholy as is the scene, ~~let us remember~~ that exile to Siberia is not now the terrible fate it was in former days, and that death on the gallows, so common with us, is unknown in Russia except as the penalty of high treason.

In the suburbs of Moscow are various ornamen-

tal gardens, to which the people resort, especially on Sundays; for Sunday, after morning church, is a holiday, the Russians, both men and women, smoking cigarettes, sipping tea, and playing cards, of which they are passionately fond; the Germans, and there are many here, drinking beer, smoking their pipes, or listening to the music of an orchestra, or to the singing of some band of Tyrolese or Gypsies. We even saw them one day sitting beneath their umbrellas in a chill, misty rain, and drinking in the sweet sounds as complacently as if they had been by the sunny Rhine. These gardens are kept with care, and every shrub and tree is cultivated which the climate favors. There are trim hedges, plots of bright flowers, lindens and elms and locusts; and if you do not look beyond to see the native forests — the sombre firs and thin birches that stretch away to the horizon — you will hardly credit your high latitude.

I know not which is the more beautiful city, Constantinople as you approach it from the Sea of Marmora, or Moscow from the Sparrow Hills. The one rises from the water's edge, its white minarets melting into the blue sky of the south; the other towers and flashes from the northern plain. About

the Turkish capital cluster the storied hills of Europe and Asia; around that of Muscovy the river winds like a line of enchantment, and the lofty domed monasteries on its borders stand like sentinels keeping watch over the sacred shrines. I know not; but had I one drop of Russian blood in my veins, Moscow should be to me Queen of the World!

MOSCOW BELLS.

MOSCOW BELLS.

That distant chime! As soft it swells,
What memories o'er me steal!
Again I hear the Moscow bells
Across the moorland peal!
The bells that rock the Kremlin tower
Like a strong wind, to and fro, —
Silver sweet in its topmost bower,
And the thunder's boom below.

They say that oft at Easter dawn
When all the world is fair,
God's angels out of heaven are drawn
To list the music there.
And while the rose-clouds with the breeze
Drift onward, — like a dream,
High in the ether's pearly seas
Their radiant faces gleam.

O when some Merlin with his spells
A new delight would bring,
Say: I will hear the Moscow bells
Across the moorland ring!

The bells that rock the Kremlin tower
Like a strong wind, to and fro, —
Silver sweet in its topmost bower,
And the thunder's boom below!

LOFTIEST of all the structures in Moscow is the Tower of John the Great, near to the Cathedral of the Assumption. Erected just before the incoming of the Romanoff dynasty, it looks solid enough to send its peals down the centuries and welcome the latest sovereign of the line. Its basement is a chapel dedicated to St. John, over which rises story after story filled with bells, the largest weighing sixty-four tons — nearly five times the weight of the great bell of England, at York Minster, yet only half that of the "Czar Kolokol," the broken bell which rests on a granite pedestal at the foot of the tower. The smallest two are of silver, most sweet, most musical; and above them expands the golden dome, its crowning cross nearly three hundred feet in air. From whatever point one views the city this tower rises proud, majestic, the central figure of the Kremlin. The peasants regard it with reverential awe, and when, at important festivals of the Church, its huge bell, like the discharge of artillery, booms over the plain, they

TOWER OF JOHN THE GREAT

listen to it as to the voice of God. At Easter all the bells are rung in unison, making the earth tremble and burdening the air with their rich volume of sound. "Christ is risen!" thunders the lowest bell, grand and solemn as a call to judgment. "Christ is risen!" repeats each story with its peculiar harmony and power. "Christ is risen!" echoes, like an angel's song, from the silver tongues beneath the dome.

Ah, what wild music must the bells of Moscow have made at the burning of the city! Rung at first in dread alarm, and then as the town was abandoned to its fate, answering with a dull sound the stroke of falling timbers, and at the crash of the steeples plunging with weird, woeful knell into the fiery death below!

Russia, through its whole extent, is the land of bells. Every church and monastery and convent has its tower, where they hang, in number and size proportioned to the wealth of the community. The church or religious house is the most attractive feature of the landscape in northern and central Russia, and the bells are the life and joy of the parish. Over the dark forests, across the dreary plains, by the still lakes, along the winding rivers,

they send their harmonious peals, gladdening and elevating the soul. The peasant crosses himself as he listens, and believes that the saints are near and heaven awaits him yonder.

There are no chimes, however, nor are the bells rung as elsewhere; they are stationary, and the tongue is struck against the side, — the larger bells requiring for this the united efforts of several men. One feast morning, in Moscow, we saw in a low, open church-tower a man ringing half a dozen bells at once by ropes in his hands and attached to his arms. By the peculiar tolling of the larger bells, and the clang when all are struck together, the worshippers know to what service they are called and when it will begin. Full clashes of bells often introduce and conclude special ceremonies and solemn moments in the mass. There are no wedding peals nor tolling bells for ordinary funerals, as in many places with us; but the great bell tolls when a priest dies, and all are rung with tremendous clamor while an archbishop enters or leaves a place in his diocese. All the larger bells are ornamented with bas-reliefs, with arabesque figures, with sacred texts, and with an inscription relating to the date of their casting and the church for which they are

intended. As they are raised to the belfry they are sprinkled with holy water, and prayers are read and hymns sung to consecrate them to their office.

Woe to the souls hovering in this sky of the north if there be truth in the Moslem fancy that the ringing of bells disturbs their repose! Over the land they call with multitudinous tongues, and the chill, pure air vibrates unceasingly to their utterance of pathos or of power. I have heard —

> "The bells of Shandon
> That sound so grand on
> The pleasant waters of the River Lee;"

the curfew from the towers of Canterbury; the wondrous bell of the cathedral at Lyons, and those that swing in the sunny campaniles along the Mediterranean; the chimes of Burgos, and the mournful notes from the belfries of the old Jesuit missions in California; but as I write their tones die away, and before me rise the domes of Russia — gold against the pale azure of her sky — while from their depths resound those sonorous peals that fill the blue vault with harmony and float in fainter music to the far horizon. Nay, were I to frame an oath of grand and melodious sounds, I would say, By the thunder of the Kremlin tower, and the sweetness of the bells of Valdai!

TROITSA MONASTERY.

TROITSA MONASTERY.

O sacred Troitsa! when the skies
Of morn are blue I lift my eyes
To see again in azure air
Thy starry domes and turrets fair,
And to hear from thy gray cathedral walls
The chanted hymn as it swells and falls.
Then with the pilgrim train I wait
And enter, glad, thy wide-flung gate,
To drink of St. Sergius' holy well
That heals the griefs no soul may tell,
Or kneel with them at his wondrous shrine, —
His staff and his simple robe beside, —
And trace on my breast the mystic sign,
And pray for the peace of the glorified!

Then fade thy towers; the music dies;
Above me are my native skies,
Blue and clear in the August morn,
Over the pines and the rustling corn,

With a song from brook and breeze and bird
Sweet as the hymn in thy cloisters heard, —
And I know the fields are a shrine as fair,
For the Lord of the saints is here as there!

ONE bright morning we went by rail from Moscow forty miles north to the Troitsa (Trinity) Monastery. This monastery, founded in the fourteenth century by the devout hermit St. Sergius, is the most sacred shrine in Russia. The first structure was taken and destroyed by the Mongols, but it was at once built up again, and since, though often besieged, neither Tartars nor Poles nor French have been able to overcome it; plague and cholera have never ventured within its walls; but, "strong in the Lord," it has been the refuge of Czar and prince in time of trouble, and "the gates of hell (say the Russians) could not prevail against it." The way thither lies through the great colorless plain which encircles Moscow, — colorless except for the fir woods and the occasional grain fields, — and as the train moved slowly over it, stopping at every few versts for relays of pilgrims, it was natural to think of the vast influence this and kindred establishments have had upon the nation.

When Vladimir accepted the God of the Greeks,

priests and pictures and manuscripts and relics were brought at once from Constantinople and Mount Athos to Kiëff, and convents and monasteries were founded after the fashion of the East. Great privileges were granted to the priests, and even under the Tartar conquerors they were exempt from all tribute and service. Enormous sums were bequeathed to them that the givers might be sure of salvation, and most of the princes of the race of Rurik clothed themselves for death in the monkish habit that they might be at once received to heaven. Russia was filled with religious houses — shrines for the devotion of a simple, superstitious people — and the inmates wearing the black robes of the Greeks, and inheriting their manners, their traditions, and their pride, looked, and look to this day, with a patronizing, half-contemptuous air upon the secular clergy who marry, and who perform all the lowly, social offices of religion. These parish priests, called the White Clergy to distinguish them from the Black Clergy, the monks, rarely receive a salary of more than three hundred rubles,— usually it is much less,— and were it not for the garden and field attached to their houses, the gifts they receive from the peasants, and the small

fees for weddings, baptisms, and sacrament certificates, their lot would be hard indeed. Yet "happy as a priest's wife" is a proverb here, for a priest can marry but once, nor can a widower officiate, so that when the wife dies the husband must drop back into the world or take monastic vows. (Indeed, for all Orthodox Russians only the first marriage is made easy. A second marriage necessitates two years absence from Holy Communion; a third, five years; and a fourth marriage cannot take place. Not the Emperor nor the Metropolitan can authorize the latter.) The high officers of the Church, the bishops, the archbishops, the metropolitans, are almost without exception taken from the Black Clergy; and the Holy Synod in which the Patriarchate was merged by Peter the Great, consists of twelve of these dignitaries presided over by the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg. This synod decides all ecclesiastical questions, but the Emperor, as head of the Church, must sanction their decrees before they are valid. It is monks who instruct the priests in theology, and who are the directors and inspectors of academies and colleges and universities. There has long been dissatisfaction on the part of the priests at their subordinate position,

PHILARET, LATE METROPOLITAN OF MOSCOW AND ARCHIMANDRITE OF TROITSA.

but the system has remained unchanged because nothing could be published about Church matters which had not been approved by the bishop of the diocese. Under Alexander II., however, there is far more liberty of opinion and expression, and it is evident that his sympathies are with the six hundred thousand parish priests, rather than with the ten thousand monks. Two years ago, when Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, died, he appointed to the place Innocent, a priest who had become eminent by his labors in Siberia, and who, though his wife was dead, refused to become a monk, declaring that it was "a custom rather than a canon of the Church." The monks were horrified, but the more intelligent among the people applauded. Since then another married priest has been made rector of the Ecclesiastical Academy of St. Petersburg. As in the Latin Church, the rule of the monks begins to wane.

But, through the belief in miracles entertained by the masses of the people, and a reverence for that spirit of renunciation which is supposed to induce men to make their home in the cloister and the desert, the monasteries are still stately and rich and strong. The largest have a yearly income of

half a million rubles derived from the state, from their mills and gardens and fisheries, and still more from the public. Great sums are paid them for the privilege of burial within the walls, for masses said in remembrance of the dead, and for intercessory prayers for the living. Over a certain extent of the country about them they have the right of soliciting alms and of putting up boxes to receive contributions. In every station of the Moscow and St. Petersburg railway there is a box belonging to the Troitsa monastery, and its income from this source has reached two hundred thousand rubles. To the monasteries belong most of the famous relics and miracle-working pictures; they are, therefore, the resort of numberless pilgrims, who bring gifts or purchase something made by the monks — a cross, a carved spoon, tapers, and loaves of bread stamped with a sacred text. They gain much money also for the loan of these venerated pictures to a city where an epidemic prevails, or even to private families in which there is severe sickness. It is said that in Moscow, during the last cholera visitation, one such picture obtained nearly thirty thousand rubles. There are no Mendicant Friars in Russia. All the monks have a life of comfort if not

of ease, and to many of the monasteries villas are attached where the superiors, and perhaps the whole body, pass the summer.

A gleam of domes on a high plateau; a sharp outline of towers against the sky; and Troitsa rose before us, a second Kremlin, lordly in the illimitable waste.

Leaving the train we found ourselves in the midst of a throng of pilgrims setting towards the gates — the counterpart of those devout Russians whom, a few months before, we had seen at the shrines of the Holy Land; old men with flowing beards and leaning on staves, some well attired, some in rags, but all apparently forgetful of everything but the sanctuary they approached; women with the same meek faces their sisters bore to Bethlehem and to the sepulchre, and in whose coarse pelisses and dark handkerchiefs tied beneath the chin, not the least vanity or coquetry could be discerned. Crossing themselves, they passed under the arch; the strangers from the West followed, and all were within the sacred inclosure.

The massive walls of Troitsa are nearly a mile in circumference, and surmounted by a cloistered

walk, with towers at their eight angles. Within their circuit, besides the buildings of the monastery proper, there are ten churches, the principal of which is the cathedral, where lies St. Sergius shrined in massive silver. Service was progressing there, and we made our way to the door, but could hardly enter for the crowd — a crowd as dense and varied in character as that which fills the Cathedral of the Assumption at Moscow. The chants and the responses of the priests came faintly down to us from the altar, and the fragrant incense was lost in the vile odor of sheep-skins and leather and cabbage exhaled by the peasants, among whom we were wedged. Retreating, we gained the open court again, and sat down upon the steps of one of the churches where we could command a view of the whole scene.

O, the wondrous beauty of the domes! I had been enchanted with their Oriental form and color from our first sight of Russia, but here they were transfigured, and, blue, with golden stars, they lifted themselves above the towers and spires, and lay against the clear, soft sky, like azure blossoms unfolding in ethereal air. Their loveliness enraptured me, lifted me heavenward like a burst of

soul-stirring music at midnight — like the first perfect day of spring, when all the buds are swelling, and blue-birds sway and sing in the elms — and it seemed as though any prayer uttered within their charmed circle would be granted. When I think of the New Jerusalem, its temples rise with domes like those of Troitsa that summer morning!

Presently service was over and forth came the worshippers. Some of them were evidently people of high degree, but by far the larger number were the poorest of the poor — peasants and mendicants who had, perhaps, begged their way from the remotest provinces of the empire to gain the blessing of the Saint. A Russian devotee of the extremest class is twin brother to a dervish. He may be more sincere and earnest in his nobler faith than the Mohammedan; but, in his filthy rags, in his ignorant and slavish adherence to forms and traditions, and in the glory he esteems it to scorn all worldly decencies and delights, he is the same. As I looked about and saw these abject creatures prostrating themselves, making the sign of the cross and drinking the water of the holy well discovered by St. Sergius, as if each

drop were an assurance of salvation, I thought, should a being from a loftier sphere poise himself in the blue above and watch them at their devotions, and then wing his flight to Mecca and see the ceremonies around the Caaba and the well Zem-Zem, he would be at a loss which to condemn most deeply for fanaticism and superstition. Yet, so reverent were they in feature and attitude, so apparently forgetful of all but God and the shrine, that the pity with which I regarded them was mingled with sympathetic admiration. Perhaps the Mongol Khan of the thirteenth century, whom St. Louis of France hoped to convert to Christianity through the agency of his monk, Rubruquis, had seen religion take this questionable shape among his Western neighbors, and it was therefore he replied to the envoy: "The Mongols are not ignorant of the existence of a God, and they love Him with all their hearts. There are as many and more ways of being saved than there are fingers on your hands. If God has given you the Bible, he has given us the Magi. Do you go your way and we will go ours."

After visiting the sacristy, which is only inferior in treasures to that of Moscow, and ascending the

A MENDICANT

tower to see the huge bell that could almost summon the province to prayer; after quaffing the clear water of the moss-grown well, and filling our hands with the little articles which the monks made haste to sell and the pilgrims to buy; with lingering looks at the domes, we passed under the arched gateway and trod again on common ground.

At a little distance from the monastery, and on the borders of a still, dark lake, is the Convent of Gethsemane, and near it are catacombs for the hermits of the Church. We drove thither through the fir woods and found the convent a plain log structure under the strictest rule.

Could it be that this forest was the home of anchorites? We asked to see their subterranean abodes, and forthwith a monk, giving each of us a lighted taper, and crossing himself and repeating some form of prayer, opened a small door and beckoned us to follow him down the dark stairs beyond. If it were not that before me lies the half consumed taper which I brought away as a memento, the whole would seem to me now like a feverish dream. On we went till we reached a gallery lower than the lake, and where the walls were wet with its unwholesome damp. Out of it opened doors bound

with iron bands, and above them small grated windows — the doors and windows of cells. At its extremity was a small chapel finished with brass. Daily service is held here, but it was then over and the lamp burned dimly before the solitary shrine.

Beside the chapel was a miraculous well. The monk stooped down, and dipping up some of the water gave it to us to taste as if it had been a cup of nectar. The only miracle about it is that in that low, saturated soil the water does not rise and drown chapel and hermit together.

As we turned back, we asked to see one of the cells. The monk replied that there was one which its occupant had left for an hour, and, crossing himself, he undid the fastenings and bid us enter. It was a tomb in shape and size. A narrow slab with a dark blanket on it served for a bed. In one corner was an image of the Virgin with a small lamp burning before it. On a shelf against the wall lay an old leather-covered book that looked as though it might have come with the first monk from Mount Athos, and beside it hung a coarse black robe. All that indicated comfort was a tiny stove with a little pile of wood, at the foot of the bed. What would the early recluses of Kiëff have said to a

stove? This poor furniture left just room enough to turn in, and the air was so heavy and sickly that the lamp burned blue, and breathing was difficult. Yet here a man, made in the image of God, had immured himself, and was slowly committing suicide that he might win heaven!

Faint, from that atmosphere of the grave, we hastened to the upper day. How glorious seemed the soft blue sky and the sun flooding with his golden beams the still lake and the fir woods, where a light wind made music with the boughs! Ah, thought I, if Christ, in whose name this monstrous service is rendered, could walk the earth again, how would He knock at that iron door and cry, "Come forth, O thou that art as dead! Neither in dungeons nor yet at Jerusalem shall ye worship the Father, but in spirit and in truth. Away with this mockery of holiness, and take thy place among his nobler saints in the bright, working world!"

THE FAIR OF NIJNI.

THE FAIR OF NIJNI.

Now, by the Tower of Babel,
  Was ever such a crowd?
Here Turks and Jews and Gypsies,
  There Persians haughty browed;
With silken-robed Celestials,
  And Frenchmen from the Seine,
And Khivans and Bokhariotes —
  Heirs of the Oxus plain.

Here stalk Siberian hunters;
  There tents a Kirghiz clan
By mournful-eyed Armenians
  From wave-girt Astrakhan;
And Russ and Pole and Tartar,
  And mounted Cossack proud —
Now, by the Tower of Babel,
  Was ever such a crowd?

YEARS ago, when there was but a post-road from Moscow to Nijni Novgorod, encampments of Cossacks were stationed all the way to

protect merchants, going to and fro, from robbers and wolves. Now the train moves swiftly and quietly to its destination, and the brigands have fled to the provinces beyond the Volga, where as yet the whistle of the engine is unheard.

The great Fair had been open for a fortnight, when, by the night express, we left Moscow to visit it. The cars were filled with people journeying thither — traders and sight-seers from various lands. The only town of importance through which we passed was Vladimir; but in the darker night of the waning summer we only saw its lofty cathedral tower, dim against the northern sky. The region is one of the richest agricultural districts in Russia, but there was the same monotonous level until, at ten o'clock the next morning, Nijni rose before us, crowning with its Kremlin a bold bluff at the confluence of the Volga and the Oka — a bluff that seemed a mountain after the flatness of the plain.

From the station we drove at once to the Hôtel Russie, in the old town, where we had fortunately secured rooms a week previous. This large hotel was a fair in itself. The first floor opened on to the street, where a throng of vehicles of all sorts was constantly arriving and departing. The next

floor was given up to dining-rooms, in which you might see all the costumes and hear all the languages of Europe. Here, too, was an apartment where tanks of running water, bordered by growing ferns and flowers, were filled with the famous sterlet of the Volga, swimming at ease, and ready to be served up at any moment to the epicurean guest. This fish is a small species of sturgeon, more delicate than the salmon in tint and flavor, and sent from its native rivers to all the cities of the Continent. Above were the bed-chambers with floors of wood or of brick; uncarpeted, but airy and comfortable.

Breakfast over, we walked up the steep, narrow ravine behind the house to the top of the bluff. Here is the old town. At our right was the Kremlin with its massive white-washed walls, thirty feet in height, within which are the arsenal, the barracks, the governor's house, and the cathedral where lies buried Minin, the peasant patriot of Nijni, who early in the seventeenth century roused Russia to free herself from the Poles. Two hundred years later, during the French invasion, his battle-flag was unfurled again and carried at the head of the army to inspire the people. His name is still a

watchword of loyalty. A noble obelisk stands here to perpetuate his fame, and the finest monument of Moscow, modeled in enduring bronze, represents him clad in his peasant's blouse, standing in a commanding attitude and calling upon Prince Pojarski to rise and go forth with him for the redemption of their common country.

At the foot of the bluff was modern Nijni, crowding up to the Oka, here as large as the Volga, and so covered with all sorts of craft that it seemed but an extension of the town. Across it was a bridge of boats leading to the tongue of land between the two rivers on which are the streets of shops and bazaars that make up the city of the Fair. Beyond were the broad meadows, dotted with hay-stacks and stretching away to the horizon — a great alluvial plain enriched by the yearly inundations of the Volga, which rolls its royal tide through their midst, and deigns to receive the Oka, on its way to the Caspian. For natural beauty there is no such view in Northern and Central Russia as this from the Kremlin of Nijni. Below us were the hurrying crowds of two continents; and taking a last look at the striking landscape, we descended to mingle with them and see the interior of this gigantic exchange.

Since the middle of the fourteenth century a fair has been held at Nijni, or in the neighborhood. For some time it was fixed at Makarief, a place farther down the Volga, and it is still known to the Central Asiatics as the Fair of Mäkäria. The productions of the West come here by railway; those of the East by the old channels of sledge and barge and caravan — indeed, some Asiatic travellers spend all the rest of the year in going to and fro. Nijni of itself has some forty thousand inhabitants. During the Fair it often counts two hundred thousand. The number present at any one time is still calculated by the amount of bread sold by the bakers, and perhaps a million different persons visit it during the two months of its continuance; while goods to the value of a hundred millions of rubles are bought and sold. Under Alexander I., the low, marshy point of land between the two rivers was prepared for building with as much care as was the swamp of the Neva for the erection of St. Petersburg. Beneath each street is a great sewer built of stone and cleansed several times a day by streams of water from the river. At regular intervals are small white towers containing staircases for descent into the sewers, which are under the care of Cos-

sacks. Around all is a canal, and, for further security against fire, a fine of twenty-five rubles is imposed for smoking anywhere except in these underground apartments. Along the streets are the bazaars containing several thousand stalls filled with the lighter and more fanciful articles of merchandise, while the heavy goods are disposed in sheds and booths, or on boats and barges, or heaped upon matting on the ground.

At the door of the hotel we took droskies for the Fair, a mile away. The street was filled with people on foot, and with carriages and drays and carts of every description going back and forth; and as we whirled down the steep slope that leads to the bridge over the Oka, the crowd was so great that it was with difficulty we could make our way. Cossacks, as mounted police, with flashing eyes, and fiery horses which they sat like centaurs, were riding up and down; and, what with the strange costumes and languages, the blinding dust which the rising wind swept through the air, and the hum from the boats on the river, we began to understand what is meant by the Fair of Nijni.

Opposite the bridge and in the centre of the bazaar, is the house occupied by the governor dur-

ing the Fair. From its top floated the Russian flag, while from the small church near, built by the merchants to commemorate the Czar's escape from the murderer Karokozoff, waved the Oriental banners of the Fair proper. Beneath the gov ernor's house we entered the bazaars, the first devoted mainly to articles of dress and personal adornment. Here, each in his stall filled with shelves and cases covered with glass, the traders displayed their wares. First were Russians from beyond the Oural with various stones cut at the Works at Ekaterineburg, or by the artisans at their homes with a foot-lathe, in the evenings or on holidays; brooches and buttons and seals of perfect malachite, that vivid green overspread with mysterious figures which made it the favorite amulet of antiquity; crystals of amethyst, violet enough to be still a charm against wine; and of aqua-marine, with a clear sea tint in shade or sun; and of topaz, from the pale yellow to the orange-brown;—beautiful gems which it is a shame for fashion to discard — and rose tourmalines, fair enough to be set in diamonds; and pure white crystals, cut into globes for necklaces, or wrought into twelve-sided seals engraved with the signs of the zodiac; transparent

as the cups the luxurious Roman emperors brought from India to be used on their feast-days, and cool as the balls these same voluptuaries gave the dainty Lollias and Julias to hold in their hands during the heats of summer; and, rarest of all, paper-weights where upon a base of jasper were grouped the half-precious stones of Siberia, fashioned into fruit and leaves. Near by were men of Khorassan and Bokhara with ornaments and slender bars of lapis-lazuli, and turquoises from the old mine of Nishapur stuck by the dozen into rolls of wax; while over against them stood Prussians from the Baltic with amber for the Chinese to burn as fragrant incense before their gods. Then came Persians from the south shore of the Caspian, displaying carpets and shawls and cashmeres — handsome, dark-bearded men clad in caftans of their own silk trimmed with gilt bands, and speaking French with ease to Europeans. From some of the stalls Armenians looked out with sad, and Jews with eager eyes; while, beyond, were men of every race between Nijni and the Atlantic, with the varied fabrics and small wares of their respective countries.

Of course Russian manufactures were in the

IVAN AND NADIA.

ascendant. Here were piles of the silks and satins and tissues of Moscow, some of them woven with gold and silver threads to suit the markets of the East, and heaps of printed cloths, gay-colored, for the same buyers; elegant articles of silver and of leather; cutlery from Tula, and stores of samovars (tea-urns), which no family, however poor, can do without; wooden trunks bound with bands of brass or iron, the bureau of the peasant and the receptacle for the humble trousseau of the bride on her wedding-day; while among heavier things were stacks of boxes filled with beet-root sugar from central Russia, and long lines of kegs of caviare from the sturgeon fisheries of the Volga, the Kama, and the Oural.

Many of the Russian merchants here belonged formerly to the serf class, and by law the credit allowed them was limited to five rubles, but, on the security of their word alone, large sums were annually intrusted to them, for which they were expected to make large returns. Now, thanks to the enlightened wisdom of the present Emperor, they trade in their own right, and pay tribute to no master. Some of them were men of noble mien and of rare business ability, able to hold high place in any commercial centre of the world.

To this Fair crowd all the light trades and professions, — theatrical companies, bands of Tyrolese and Gypsies, fortune-tellers, showmen of every kind, peddlers, beggars by the hundred, from the black-robed monk soliciting alms for his monastery in the name of St. George or St. Sergius, to the wretched creature in tattered sheep-skin, who puts out his withered hand for a kopeck. Beyond the bazaars are restaurants, concert and dancing halls, rooms of meeting for merchants, and a multitude of small inns and tea-houses.

What we saw of the Fair at our first visit belonged largely to Europe. The next day we went farther, and found Asia.

ASIA AT NIJNI.

ASIA AT NIJNI.

Give me a melon of Khiva,
Luscious and round and yellow —
It 's mate for the Lord of China
Hardly so fair and mellow —
And place on the tray beside it,
Worthy of sheikh or khan,
Peaches that grew in the gardens
Of the golden Zerefshan.

And a cup of Flowery Pekoe —
Tea of the mandarins —
Gathered in dewy morning,
Just when the spring begins.
(Keep for the peasant and Tartar,
The bowls of the dark Bohea
Plucked when the heats of summer
With rank leaves load the tree.)

Ah, what ravishing flavors!
Not the wine of the Rhine,
Not of Tokay, nor the nectar
Won from the Cyprian vine,

Nor Sicily's oranges rarest,
Nor sweetest figs of Dalmatia,
Rival the Flowery Pekoe
And the spicy melons of Asia!

THE most important article of merchandise at Nijni is tea. Of the fifteen million pounds of fine quality brought to Russia through Kiachta, some goes direct to Moscow, but the larger part finds its way to the Fair, whence it is distributed over the empire. Piled up in the warehouses were thousands of packages about two feet square — frames covered with skins in which the precious contents had come securely on boats and camels and sledges to Perm, and thence down the Kama and up the Volga to Nijni.

Over the whole Russian Empire and Central Asia tea is the universal drink and luxury. Here was the delicate green tea for the dainty Moslems of the cities who would sip it in the booths, between their prayers, and when the effusion was exhausted, eat the leaves, holding them between the thumb and finger; and brick tea for the mass of the people, and for the Kirghiz and Kalmuck rovers of the steppe — the refuse of the tea-crop, pressed into solid cakes, and in the towns mixed with milk and

drank from bowls into which bread is dipped the while, and in the nomad yourts boiled in great cauldrons and seasoned with mutton fat and salt and parched millet, or whatever the inmates may have to make it more nutritious; while if they be Kalmucks, before any of the family fills his Chinese wooden bowl a spoonful or two will be thrown to the four winds for the gods. Then there was the great bulk of teas for Russia proper, — those pure black teas raised in northern China and brought fresh and unimpaired to the market; teas some of which are sold at twelve rubles the pound; almost colorless when drawn, but possessing an exquisite flavor and bouquet, and stirring the blood like wine. Here, too, was rhubarb, of which China sends annually through Kiachta some half million pounds; and silk in curious bales, and robes embroidered in brilliant hues. But few Chinese merchants were seen, Russians and Tartars saving them the long journey.

Next to tea the most important article of traffic here is the iron of Siberia. Under a mile-long gallery by the river, and even upon a sand-bank which the falling waters had left bare, it was heaped up in every form from solid bars and sheets and rails

to cauldrons for the wandering tribes, and small household utensils for the cabins of the peasants. Still skirting the river were warehouses filled with cotton; pyramids of mill-stones from the Oural; great piles of rags collected from every quarter for the paper-makers (think what the rags of eastern Europe and Asia must be!); with hides from the steppes, and grain from the productive fields of the South.

Most attractive was the store of furs, from the coarse, despised wolf-skin which you could buy for a handful of kopeks, to the tiny, fine, glossy sable, trophy of the skill and daring of some native hunter on Lake Baikal or the Amoor; valued now at two hundred rubles and likely to be purchased to deck the robe of some proud Osmanli at Constantinople, — for sables, like diamonds, are prized the world over, and captivate alike the Chinese mandarin, the Turkish pasha, the European prince, and the luxurious American. Near to these were felts both fine and coarse, for hats and blankets and winter boots; and rugs of Siberian wool for carpets and sledge-covers. At a little distance a broad space was covered with timber from beyond the Oural, which had floated hither in rafts and barges; and,

close to the water, lying in piles on the ground or waiting to be removed from the boats, were tons of dried fish from the Caspian and the lower Volga — principal food of the poorer classes during the Church fasts which occupy one third of the year.

A large and growing trade with Khiva, Bokhara, and Khokand centres at Nijni. Peter the Great saw the importance of these oases in the Tartar desert, and opened roads from the lower Volga to the Oxus which remain in use to this day. From five to six thousand camels are employed in the caravans which leave Bokhara during the spring for different points on the Russian frontier, especially Orenburg distant eleven hundred miles, and where they arrive in two months' time. From thence their goods are transported to the Volga, by which they reach Nijni.

And what do they bring to the Slavonian mart, these Moslems of "the noble Bokhara" and its sister states?

Wheat and barley and rice from their irrigated fields; silk and cotton in bales, the latter of fine quality but not wholly free from seeds, which are laboriously separated from the fibre by the fingers of the women; sheep-skins and countless bales of

wool, both of goats and of sheep; the jet-black, curly lamb-skins of Karakool which are only produced in a small territory between Bokhara and the Oxus, and which, like rare furs, always command their price in gold. The handsomest go to Teheran and Constantinople, and the black, white, and gray skins, which make the hats of ordinary Persians and Tartars, as well as most of those which under the name of "Astrakhan" go to Europe and America, are quite inferior, and from a different locality. Then there are striped and embroidered kalats from Khiva — garments cut like dressing-gowns and highly prized by the Tartars of Russia; and gay silken shawls and handkerchiefs of the soft, loosely woven fabrics of Bokhara. Their dried fruits are unrivaled — peaches, grapes and apricots from the gardens of the Jaxartes and the Zerefshan; and, if it be in season, melons from the banks of the Oxus — those delicious green and yellow Ürgendji melons whose fame has gone even to Pekin, where they are sometimes sent as a gift to the emperor, and which, in Russia, are often exchanged for their bulk in sugar when sugar is bartered at a ruble a pound.

A part of this Asiatic merchandise is sold for

money, but most of it is exchanged for manufactured articles at great profit to the Russians; for iron kettles, cutlery, large copper samovars, jewelry, coral beads and various trinkets; leather for water skins, broadcloth, white muslins, chintzes, velvet, gold thread for embroidery, bright colored shawls and ribbons, thread, and sugar, — but neither guns nor ammunition, for Russia will not furnish these to her turbulent neighbors. The goods are dispatched from Nijni to Orenburg, and early in November the caravans set out on their return journey.

Most of the Kirghizes who conduct them stay on the frontier, but here and there in the throng was one dark and stalwart, with bright eyes, flat and almost beardless face, and clumsy motions; wearing a felt cap, a shabby kalat girt about the loins, and full trousers thrust into rough boots, who surveyed the scene with the wondering curiosity of a child. Possibly he had no errand there but to see the Franks; more likely he had brought for sale some of the sturdy horses of the steppe. As I looked at these men and thought of the long march they would soon begin across the desert wastes with their infrequent, brackish springs; exposed to the

mirage that shines but to betray, to the sand-storms with their suffocating breath, to the terrible snow-hurricanes that blind and overwhelm, and, yet worse, to the fierce attacks of plundering Turkomans, their heavy Mongol forms and faces were invested with a kind of heroic dignity, and I would fain have spoken to them in their rude Turkish tongue, and bid them God speed on their perilous way.

There is another manufacture here to which these nomads contribute. Those piles of boxes filled with stearine candles are the product of the tallow of their sheep, which in flocks of many thousands they drive across the steppes to the Siberian frontier, and from thence to Ekaterineburg, where they are killed and converted into tallow.

Along the miles of wharves were many Tartars carrying merchandise to and from the boats and the shore — now bars and sheets of iron from the Oural; now rolls of leather from Kazan; now bales of the cotton of Khiva; now skins filled with wine from the vineyards of Tiflis; now sacks of madder from Bokhara. Some were clad in caftans of blue cotton, some in coats of sheep-skin, with

turbans on their heads, or hats of light felt, or caps with a rim of fur. The more devout among them said their prayers daily in the mosque which rises beside the Armenian chapel and the handsome Russian church beyond the bazaars, and they formed part of the multitude that slept every night on the barges and boats of the rivers.

At evening the city was given up to diversion. Myriad lights gleamed through the streets and along the Oka, whose placid waters reflected distinctly every object upon the shore. Colored lanterns lent their glow to the grounds; music and the hum of voices filled the air, but there was no open rioting or confusion; the police were everywhere; the Cossacks paced slowly up and down the bridge, and in momentary lulls the peeping of frogs was heard, showing that civilization has not yet wholly reclaimed the ancient marsh.

The city was given up to diversion, but mainly for Europeans. The Asiatics keep here the primitive customs of Bokhara and the steppe; and, when night fell, they lay down to rest by their bales, or crept into boats and barges, or stretched themselves on mats along the ground, and slept like children, oblivious of care, and at one with destiny.

From this throng of various nations two individuals come vividly to mind: the one, a Bokhariot, whom we saw repeatedly near the Oriental stalls, an observer rather than an actor — his Tartar features softened into a noble, serene melancholy — the dignity of an emir in the poise of his turbaned head — and, as he surveyed the bustling Europeans, his thoughts busy, I fancied, with the waning fortunes of his race. The other was a young Russian girl belonging to a band of singers, whose office it was to solicit money from the bystanders when the songs were done. It was evidently new work for her. Her face was like a spring flower, fair and sweet, and she blushed and trembled as she held out her hand, — a woman who should have been shrined in some happy home, instead of being the gaze of restaurant and saloon. How fares the Tartar by the distant Oxus? And what fate has overtaken the innocent maiden?

The Fair of Nijni is an institution for Asia, and will endure and grow until better means of communication throw open the interior of that vast continent to the commerce of the world. Now, from the Oural to the Pacific, it is through the

medium of caravans and fairs that business is transacted; and goods are bartered rather than sold. The hunter on the Amoor gives his sables and fox-skins; the Kirghiz his flocks and herds; and the Tartar of the south his fruit and silk and cotton for the products of Europe. Nay, even the nomads of remote and thinly populated districts have their fairs of the steppe, to which they repair on horseback, dressed in their best, and gravely bargain for a few trifles, returning with them to their tents. But gradually, as intercourse becomes freer, this state of things will pass away. With every year the West gains upon the East. Deserts and mountains are no longer impassable barriers. Already Russia is planning a railway across Siberia, and another from the Caspian to the Aral Sea; and the day will come when the great Fair of Nijni will be as much a thing of the past, as is that wonder of naturalists, the mammoth of the Lena.

KAZAN.

KAZAN.

Kazan looks down from the Volga wall,
Bright in the darkest weather;
And the Christian chime and the Moslem call
Sound from her towers together.

Shrine of the Golden Horde was she;
Boast of the proud Bokhara;
And her fame was wafted over the sea,
And sung in the far Sahara.

Woe to her Faith and her turbaned Lord!
The Cross and the Russ were stronger;
Her splendors now are the Czar's reward,
And her Khans are kings no longer!

Yet still she looks from the Volga wall,
Bright in the darkest weather;
And the Christian chime and the Moslem call
Sound from her towers together.

WITH the novelty and interest of the Fair unexhausted, we left Nijni for Kazan, three hundred miles east. A furious wind was blowing,

as under the high bluff of the old town we wound along the roughly paved street to the Volga side — a wind that filled the air with clouds of sand, obscuring the view, and recalling the story of the hurricane which raged at Moscow when the pretender, Dimitri, approached the Kremlin; an awful blast whose whirling dust enveloped the false Czar and his attendants, and made the people, stricken with suspicious terror at the sight, cross themselves and cry out, "God keep us from harm!"

It was one of the boats of the "Volga and Caspian Steamship Company" in which we had taken passage, and we were no sooner on board than she was under way. Several hundred steamers ply the Volga between Tver and Astrakhan, beginning with those of very light draught for the upper stream, and growing larger as the river deepens. They have neither saloon nor state-room on deck, but, below, a cabin and a small apartment for ladies. Our captain was one of that race of born sailors, a Finn, and spoke tolerable English, which he had picked up on a voyage he once made to New York. We were the only "first-class" passengers, and our meals were daintily served in the ladies' cabin.

The Volga, at Nijni, is about three fourths of a mile wide, and as its average fall is but a little over three inches to the mile, it flows with a calm, equable current until it loses itself in the Caspian, eighty feet below the level of the ocean. In winter it is a sledge-road, a mass of ice from the Valdai Hills to Astrakhan; in summer, covered with countless boats that carry the products of the East and South to St. Petersburg and the Baltic. A little below Nijni the bold bluff slopes rapidly to the water, and thenceforth, throughout its whole extent, the banks are comparatively low and monotonous.

The wild wind had brought an autumn rain, fine and chill. The region through which we passed is very productive, yet, bare of harvests and baked in the summer sun, it presented little of interest as seen from the deck through the storm. Now and then large barges passed us towed by steamers, and loaded with dried fish from Astrakhan, which, at a little distance, resembled piles of wood. At night the boat anchored near the shore, and we made ourselves as comfortable as we might upon the divans and cushions of the cabin — beds and bedding being things unknown on the boats of the Volga.

Morning found the rain still falling; the shores flat and noteless; and laden boats and barges beating up the gray, slow-moving river. A little after noon the clouds began to give place to clear kies, and at three o'clock we reached a small settlement on the left bank, and saw, crowning a high ridge, the domes and towers of Kazan.

This Tartar city, capital of the kingdom founded in the middle of the thirteenth century by Batu Khan, grandson of the great Ghengis, derives its name, so says one of its own historians, from the golden kettle (kazan) which a servant of the first Khan let fall into the little river, Kazanka, when dipping up water for his thirsty master. By this hill the fierce Golden Horde halted in their advance from the East, and laid the foundations of a lordly state. Behind them was Asia, already theirs; before them Europe, trembling at their approach. On their fleet horses they overran Muscovy, plundering and despoiling as they went; and it was gravely proposed in a council of their rulers, to destroy every town and city of the Unbelievers, and turn the whole land into a pasture for their flocks! But Mohammed was not to reign in Russia. After centuries of fear and oppression and war,

John the Terrible, the last powerful sovereign of the race of Rurik, besieged Kazan and took it by springing a mine beneath the walls. The Tartars made a heroic resistance; and hard and cruel as this monarch was, and miserably as his people had suffered, he is said to have wept when he forced the gates and saw the heaps of dead bodies that blocked the streets and courts of the beleaguered city. A few years later, the Tartar kingdom of Astrakhan yielded to his arms, and thenceforth those who remained of these dark-eyed followers of the Prophet were humble subjects of the Czars.

We took droskies at the river side and drove up the long ascent to the town. The broad, sandy, uneven road was filled with vehicles going to and fro, — droskies and carts laden with merchandise, most of them driven by Tartars in white felt hats, sheep-skin coats, high boots, and wide trousers. On our left was a huge pyramidal monument of stone to the memory of the Muscovites who fell in the siege. Few buildings were to be seen, for the Volga sometimes makes a lake of the whole space between the shore and the hill. Reaching the summit, we turned into the broad street, lined with bazaars and stately buildings, which runs along its

brow, and were soon at home in a spacious new hotel kept by a Finn, whose beds were more luxurious and whose table more inviting than any we found afterwards in Russia.

An hour's repose and we went forth to see the town. At the crest of the hill, on the ruins of the old Tartar fortifications, the Russians have built their Kremlin, — one massive gateway still standing of the city of the Khans. Within the walls is the cathedral, begun soon after the siege, and to commemorate the victory; and near by is the convent, of a little later date, in whose chapel is a copy of the miraculous picture of the Virgin now shrined in the Kazan Church at St. Petersburg. The chapel copy wears a crown of diamonds, the gift of the Empress Catherine. The face is perhaps the most pleasing one of all the Virgins of the Church, and under the name of "Our Lady of Kazan," it is adored from the White Sea to the Euxine. Service was progressing as we stood in the chapel, and the space before the altar was filled with nuns in high close caps, and long black veils, while on the wall behind them was painted a horrible representation of the torments of hell, — yellow wreathing flames, into which devils with sharp

OUR LADY OF KAZAN.

forks were thrusting the condemned. If this was their thought of the future, and only the Church could save, the wonder was, not that the Sisters were so many, but rather that any woman of Kazan was left in the outside world. After prayers we went into the convent, an ancient building in whose unadorned rooms the younger nuns were embroidering sacred banners and vestments, with crowns and crosses and wreaths of flowers, in bright floss and thread of gold and silver. Their fair, broad faces wore an anxious look, and they bent over their frames as if each stitch made them surer of heaven. The afternoon sun looked in at the high, uncurtained windows; the swelling domes of the cathedral shone in the upper blue; but not one raised her eyes from her work, or spoke above her breath in reply to the directions of her teacher; and it was with a sigh of compassion that I stepped over the worn threshold into the free air.

From her commanding height Kazan looks always towards Asia. The trade of Siberia pours through her streets. Her manufactures of cloth and leather and silk and soap, go east rather than west for a market. Her university gives special attention to Oriental languages and literature; nay,

nearly one fifth of her seventy thousand inhabitants are of Tartar race and creed, and turn to Bokhara rather than to St. Petersburg for guidance and inspiration.

Below the crest of the hill is a narrow sheet of water, the Kaiban Lake. On its shores is the working town of shops and factories, and beyond is the Tartar quarter, into which we drove in the late afternoon. It was difficult to believe we were in cold and Orthodox Russia. The houses wore the colors of Damascus; minarets rose before us tipped with upright, glittering crescents attached by a single horn; dogs with the true bark and bound of Stamboul rushed forth as we passed; fat, rosy children, in queer caps and trousers, peeped from the courts; a solitary woman went by, attired in a long robe, and drawing her shawl over her face like a veil, so that only one eye was free to regard the strangers; the shoemakers' shops were filled with boots and slippers of bright morocco leather, some of them gayly worked with gold; the merchants waited with Cairene indifference our pleasure to buy; and, to complete the illusion, from a near minaret came the cry, "To prayer! to prayer! There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his

Prophet!" We had just come from a Russian church, whose worshippers crossed themselves devoutly before the image of Our Lady of Kazan; and as the Tartars, without shrine or picture, addressed their prayers to the one God, I saw how, from their point of view, they might call their Christian neighbors idolaters, and scorn to yield the Faith of their fathers.

Quiet, but alien, these people dwell among the Russians. Has a youth among them a studious turn? He goes to the colleges of Bokhara. Would one see the world? He journeys to Constantinople; possibly to the holy cities of Arabia. The West and the Franks have no part in their love or their ambition. As a race they are comely. Robust in form without being stout, their motions are easy and of a certain dignity; their complexions are dark and fresh, their features regular, their eyes of black or grayish-blue shaded by heavy lashes, and in them there is often a patient sadness that belongs not to their blood, but is born of their fortunes and the resignation taught by their religion. Their lives are simple and frugal. They are all taught in their own schools to read and write and cast accounts, and their honesty and sobriety

make them sought as servants, clerks, and crafts men. In the country they are small farmers, and almost every house has its hives of bees. Wine being forbidden, they make of their honey a kind of mead, and prepare their tea like the Tartars of the steppe. Their unleavened cakes still bake upon the hearth like those Sarah kneaded for the angels, and their greatest delicacy is parched corn — perhaps the same which Boaz gave to Ruth — boiled in milk or fried in butter. All delight in tobacco, and as there are no Wahabee Zelators near to scent its odor and bring them to trial, their pipes are always in use or worn at their girdles. Few of them cumber their dwellings with beds or chairs. The cushioned divan, or the bench spread with mats of felt, suits them better than all the elaborate upholstery of Europe. Proud of their race and their traditions, they cling fondly to the past; and although the Government has established churches and schools among them whose services and instructions are in their own tongue, they hear the mass and learn the lessons, but are as far from conversion as ever. Yet they must be affected by the life and progress of the nation, and doubtless with every year they will grow more like their conquerors.

On our way back to the hotel we drove a few versts east of the city to see a spot whose picturesque, woody ravines have gained it the name of the Russian Switzerland. It was a ridge like that upon which Kazan is built, but tree-covered and broken into miniature hills and valleys. From its crest we looked over the broad country beyond — a rolling region, with few habitations visible; here and there a thick grove, perhaps of the oaks of this province carefully preserved by the Government for ship-building; while about us, and crowning lower slopes, were forests of white birches growing strong and tall as in their native air; best of trees to the Russian—their bark tanning his leather, their leaves giving him a yellow dye, their sap furnishing him a kind of wine, their wood making his household utensils, and as dried splinters and fuel supplying him with candles and saving him from the rigors of winter.

A golden glow suffused the landscape, and turning west again we saw the sun go down in splendor with an orb above it, a second sun. A chill wind sprang up, tossing the thin foliage of the birch trees, sighing through the pines, and dying away in mournful murmurs on the horizon of Asia. The

sunset glory faded, and in its room appeared a cloud that spread rosy wings and floated like a bright bird over the dark and sluggish river.

Alighting in the wide, modern street, Russian officers erect and haughty, went to and fro; Russian ladies, in the costumes of Paris, drove or sauntered by; the roll of the evening drum came from the barracks, and there was nothing but the name to remind us that we were in the city of the Khans.

THE VOLGA, TO SAMARA.

Replace by new ms. poem.

THE VOLGA, TO SAMARA.

Did you say serf, sir? *serf!* there's not one
Living to-day in the light of our sun!
Russians, free Russians, we all of us are,
From Osip and Michael, my boys, to the Czar!

This cabin is old, but the garden is mine;
And mine are these fields, and that forest of pine;
When I will I can build me a house strong and good
With logs of my own I shall hew in the wood.

O could my poor father but dwell by my side!
He toiled all his days for a master, and died
So worn and so hopeless, he told me that morn
He wished I and Esper had never been born.

One year, and God gave us our glorious Czar!—
How strange seems that servitude now, and how far—
On my wall hangs his picture full facing the sun,
With the cross on his breast, in the Caucasus won;

From Moscow it came with its wide, gilded rim; —
Wilt enter and see it, sir? Daylight grows dim
Here under the fir trees, and yonder I see
Osip and Michael stand waiting for me.

IN a larger boat we reëmbarked the next morning. The deck was crowded with soldiers going to distant barracks, and with Tartars, reclining, after the fashion of the East, upon mats of felt or skin, but we were still the only occupants of the saloon. The sky, though cloudless, had a grayish hue, and a strong cold wind blew with uninterrupted fury from the north — the sirocco of the Pole. The low banks were occasionally varied by bluffs covered with trees, but sometimes for miles together the widening river hardly allowed us a glimpse inland. At intervals a church with its glittering dome rose to view, making the Russians cross themselves devoutly and the Tartars relapse into still deeper apathy; or we passed a serf village, always the same assemblage of barn-like huts before the dreary background of interminable pines.

I never could look at them without picturing the life within, — the cracks in the walls stuffed with moss, the low smoky ceiling, the table and benches fashioned with a hatchet, the chest containing the

PEASANT CABINS.

few family treasures, the bowls and spoons of birch wood which serve for the cabbage soups and the fish stews of the fast-days, the steaming foul air of the long winter nights when all the family, wrapped in their garments of sheep-skin or coarse woolen cloth, lie huddled together on the top of the great brick stove or its adjoining shelf, while perhaps a calf or a pig is shut in a pen below. So, during the snows of winter, the wandering Kirghizes of the plains crowd their felt-covered yourts, and in summer both alike take to the ground and ask only the shelter of the sky. The peasants have a proverb, "With plenty of bread it is paradise under the pines," and I always ended by trusting they had at least an abundance of food, and remembering that a better day has dawned for them.

An isolated cabin was rarely seen. Drifting snows, the great uninhabited spaces between the towns, the wolves and bears which infest some regions, and a feeling of individual weakness born of their long social degradation, combine to keep the peasants massed in villages. A deeper cause, perhaps, is their Oriental love of patriarchal rule and tribal association.

When at the close of the sixteenth century serfdom was introduced, it was perhaps a necessary evil. For more than two hundred years the Tartars had ravaged the country, and through their tyranny and example the nation was in danger of becoming nomadic. The cities were thronged and there was a constant migration of northern peasants to the warm plains of the South. Serfdom, making them stationary, insured quiet and the cultivation of the soil. But what woes it brought to the poor rustic, forced to toil without hope of change on the field where he was born, with flogging or banishment as the penalty of his lord's displeasure; to whom the law allowed only a credit of five rubles, and who, in some provinces, was obliged even to yield his bride, on her wedding night, to the pleasure of his master! Happily humanity is often better than its institutions. Of course there were here and there indulgent proprietors whose serfs engaged in enterprises of their own and won wealth and name and fame, but these were the rare exceptions. In general, if a serf accumulated a little money he dared not let it be known; and nothing is more common than to find such secreted coins buried in the ground of old hamlets. No

wonder the brave, philanthropic Alexander II. on coming to the throne made it his first care to remove these burdens that pressed so heavily on half of his subjects. Yet so great was the fear of a return to wandering habits that, though the serf became at once personally free, the process of acquiring land was to be gradual; and to induce him to remain where he was, upon his payment to the proprietor of one fifth of the sum required for seven acres of land, the Government paid the remaining four fifths, charging him six per cent. interest upon the loan for forty-nine years. In addition to this, he could not leave the community without forfeiting his right to the common lands. There is no longer solicitude regarding the effect of the change. Already under this arrangement three fourths of the former serfs are land-owners, and there is constant improvement in their manner of living. They have the faults and vices of a subject race, but, with them, qualities of a noble manhood which education and opportunity will display. Ignorant and intoxicated with the idea of liberty, at first many of them were idle, and, like children, thoughtless of the future. A gentleman of Moscow told me this story of his experience in the province of old Novgorod two years after the emancipation.

"I had contracted with the inhabitants of a certain village to furnish a large quantity of wood cut in the forest and made ready for transportation to the city. When I went among them I found they had been idle, and were in great distress because their taxes were unpaid, and the sheriff had threatened to sell all their effects the next morning at public auction. They pressed into my house weeping and lamenting, and the patriarch explained that their debt was eleven hundred silver rubles, towards which they could raise but two hundred.

"'But,' said I, 'if I see the sheriff and advance part of this money for you and stay the sale, will you go to work?'

"'With the first fall of snow that we can take our sledges to the woods,' replied the gray-haired father of the village. The next morning I drove some fifteen versts to see the sheriff; explained their situation to him, and, by advancing five hundred rubles towards their taxes, persuaded him to wait for the rest.

"'But you'll regret it,' said he; 'they are an idle, good-for-nothing set, and you'll never get your money back.'

"I had confidence in the people, however, and when I returned and told them the result they crowded about me and kissed my hand and blessed me with tears in their eyes, while they again promised to begin work with the first snow. Then they sent me little presents — a few eggs, a fish, a bowl of meal — anything they could spare from their narrow stores. For some days the weather continued mild; then one evening the snow began to fall and the next morning the ground was covered to the depth of six inches. My house was away from the village, and after breakfast I said to my companion, a young man from Moscow: 'Now we will ride over to the woods and see about the work.'

"He shook his head, and exclaimed, as we started off, 'There 's not the least use in going. Not a soul will stir.'

"'Wait and see,' said I. 'I have kept faith with them, and I believe they will with me.'

"At the first point where we should have seen them we halted, but no one was in sight. 'There,' shouted my friend, 'I told you so!'

"'Wait a little longer,' said I, and we drove on till at a turn in the road, lo! the whole popula-

tion, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, with sledges and axes and hatchets, on their way to the woods! They worked steadily; fulfilled their contract with me, and soon discharged their debt. When I told Count Pushkin about it afterwards, he listened with tearful eyes and said, 'Ah! Our people are truthful. We shall yet be proud of the Russians!'"

In spite, however, of their long subjection and ignorance, it is from this class that some of the most illustrious Russians have sprung. Kozma Minin, the patriot, through whose efforts the country was freed from the Poles, was a peasant of Nijni Novgorod. Nikita Demidoff, ancestor of the princely family of that name, whose discovery and development of the mines of the Oural added incalculable wealth to the empire, was a serf of the province of Tula. Michael Lomonosoff, poet and savan, who discarded the foreign languages of the court and the schools, and made the rich, flowing, vernacular Russ the language of science and literature, was a poor fisherman of Archangel. Remembering men like them, it was always with profound interest that I looked at these simple folk and their humble abodes — a race whose capacities

are yet unknown, and who may one day lead the world.

Some fifty miles below Kazan we came to the mouth of the Kama, — longest and most important of the two hundred rivers that flow into the Volga. From its source in the Oural it has a course of more than twelve hundred miles, and bears on its tide the products of the mines, the leather and tallow furnished by the herds of the steppes, and the furs and teas of far Siberia and China. On its high, bleak plains rises Perm, nearest town, of note, to Asia, — Perm, through whose streets goes the great road to Siberia, and where exiles bid farewell to Europe and to hope. During the summer nearly forty thousand men are employed upon its boats and rafts which, at Nijni, exchange the commodities of the East for those of the West.

The Volga grows perceptibly larger after receiving its great tributary, and on its broad current we went swiftly down to Simbirsk, capital of the government of that name and point of export for the wheat of the rich provinces of Pensa and Tambov which lie behind it. Here we rested for several hours during the night, which was dark and cloudy,

with a chill, mournful wind blowing over the river. We slept again upon the plush-spread divans of the saloon with cloaks and shawls for wrappings, while the Russians were camped in the cabin and under awnings upon deck, with blankets and huge feather pillows in chintz or leather covers. It was amusing to see tall, stiff, uniformed officers bustling about with bed-clothes in one hand and a bag of tea and sugar in the other, calling for hot water and arranging for an unoccupied corner. "Sichas" (directly), was the invariable response of the waiters; but here, as elsewhere in the country, they seemed to have little idea of time, and if you saw them again within an hour you were fortunate.

At dawn the steamer was under way, and as breakfast was brought in we reached Stavropol, a town of the last century, built to gain control over a horde of Kalmucks established there, and having some four thousand inhabitants. Here the Volga turns sharply to the east, and running thus for forty miles, bends south and then west again, making a circuit of a hundred miles. The land it incloses is the property of the Orloff family, famous for the partiality of the Empress Catherine and for the great diamond in the Imperial sceptre,

with which Gregory Orloff bought, for a time, the favor of his splendid and capricious mistress.

At one o'clock we reached the farthest point of the bend and were at Samara, a town at the confluence of the Samara with the Volga, farther east than Bagdad and almost in the longitude of Teheran. Here we proposed to spend a day, and, going ashore, we were conducted by the German agent of the steamship company through the broad, roughly-paved streets to a hotel which nomads and western Europeans might have united in devising and conducting. It was a great rambling structure with high, empty rooms, passages that led nowhere, and handsome staircases and doors of mahogany set in bare and plaster-crumbling walls. There were no beds ready — nothing but leather-covered benches and low, cushioned divans, and our meals, though palatable, were spoiled by being brought through the windy halls. Samara was founded nearly three hundred years ago as a frontier post against the Asiatic tribes. Its fortifications have long ago disappeared, but as the largest grain market on the Volga, and the port of Orenburg, it is one of the most important towns on the river. For Orenburg, three days' journey to the east, is on the line of

Asia, and the rendezvous of the caravans from Bokhara and the Kirghiz steppes. In her bazaars they discharge their goods, and from thence they return laden with the products and manufactures of the West. There, too, the Government has founded a military school for two hundred pupils, more than half of whom are to be selected from the sons of Tartar and Kirghiz chiefs; and thus it is a point of influence for the whole interior.

After dinner we drove out several versts to see an establishment for the cure of pulmonary diseases by the drinking of mare's milk — a Tartar remedy here thought very efficacious. The house was on the Volga bank; an airy, pretty, wooden structure, with gardens about, where petunias, verbenas, marigolds, and dahlias were still in flower. On the plain beyond, some forty mares, each with a bell around her neck, were feeding quietly. The "season" is from May to September; the charges eight rubles a week for board and twenty kopecks a bottle for milk, from three to eight bottles of which are taken daily. The number of patients was from sixty to one hundred, many of them belonging to the Russian nobility and a few from western Europe. The director was an Armenian, and the

domestics all Tartars — black-eyed, rosy-cheeked women, with bright handkerchiefs knotted over their braided hair. We went into the room where they were churning the sweet milk to sour it, and then putting it into tight bottles for use — an apartment as daintily clean as Mrs. Poyser's dairy at the Hall Farm. While we stood there, several delicate looking young men came in, and presenting their checks, drank off the milk, foaming like champagne, as if it were the most delicious of beverages. The house was tasteful, the gardens well kept, and yet it seemed to me a melancholy place for an invalid; to the west the great gray river — to the east the monotonous steppe — and, over all, the hazy autumn sky.

We returned to the town by a different route, and met on the wide, sandy road many ox-teams, some of them driven by women clad in sheep-skins, carrying stout whips in their hands and calling in a rough voice to their oxen, so that it was difficult, until we were close upon them, to distinguish them from men. There were farms on either hand, and one of the low-roofed houses was surrounded by an apple orchard. The sight was so novel that we drove out of our way to see it. As we approached,

a huge dog bounded over the wall and came towards us with a ferocious bark. We were turning away when the master approached, and sending the wolfish creature back to his kennel, picked up a handful of apples from the ground and courteously presented them to us. They were small and sour, but they reminded us of laden orchards across the sea, and their taste was grateful after the dust of the highway.

To regain the road we crossed a bare common, and there came upon a group of a stranger race than any we had that day encountered.

A GYPSY ENCAMPMENT.

A GYPSY ENCAMPMENT.

Nay! tell us not of curtained walls!
To us they were a prison.
Better than all your stately halls,
Is the heath where the blessed sunlight falls,
And the free wind blows, and the plover calls
When the mellow moon has risen.
And the sod, for us, is a nobler bed
Than the couch with richest damask spread,
For ours are the stars and the mystic ties,
That link the earth to the rolling skies.

Do you see that girl with the glance of fire?
Woe to the man that dares her ire!
She knows what planet has power to harm;
What beam of the moon will fall as balm;
And the hour when the stormy Pleiads rise,
And the Star of Love gives bliss for sighs;
And over your palm, with secret lore,
She'll read what the dark years have in store.

> Keep your wealth and your gilded bowers!
> The glory of field and sky is ours;
> And all the spirits of earth and air,
> Follow our bidding, foul or fair!

THERE are few pleasanter moments in life than those in which, for the first time, we see some object, or hear some sound, long desired, but previously known only through the imagination.

Journeying, some months before, from Damascus to Baalbec, we encamped for the night near a little village in the valley of the Barada. The furious wind, which had been blowing through the day, still continued, and almost drowned the voice of the river, swollen with the melting snows of Mount Hermon, and hastening down to the rills and fountains of the Damascus plain. At length there was a momentary lull in the air, and I lifted the curtain-door of the tent and looked out upon the Syrian night. The sky was deeply blue, and the stars shone with the brilliancy of a northern latitude. Not a sound was to be heard from the village or the camp. Suddenly there burst from the river-thicket a song so clear, so rich, so rapturous, that it seemed as if a passing seraph, flying too near the earth, had warbled some

strain of paradise above the spot! I knew it was the nightingale, and stood breathless, enchanted, when down came the wild wind from Lebanon, and wafted the celestial melody away.

Not less thrilling was the moment, when a few weeks later, in the Prado of Madrid, I first saw a veritable Gypsy. We were taking an early walk, my friends and I; the fashionable world was not yet astir, and the street was almost empty, when a young woman approached us, and in liquid Spanish asked for alms. She was of medium height, and of compact, lithe, and exquisitely rounded form; her skin was of a ruddy brown rather than the pallid olive of the Spaniard; her head and face small; her features regular and delicate; her black eyes brilliant and unflinching; her teeth tiny and dazzlingly white; her hair black and heavy, and coiled low on her shapely neck. Clad in a petticoat that scarcely reached her bare, slender ankles, with a gaudy shawl over her shoulders, the folds drawn together by her left hand, while her right was extended in entreaty, she was the prettiest, wiliest, boldest creature the sun shone upon, and the moment I saw her I exclaimed involuntarily, "The Gitano!"

Afterwards, in various countries, we met many

of the tribe, — in England, tented on the downs at the Epsom races, here a little tamed, but having still the unmistakable characteristics of their people; in Hungary and Turkey, sometimes laboring in the fields, but oftener wanderers, as becomes their blood; in Greece, roaming over the plain about Eleusis, fierce-eyed, squalid, men and women whom you would not like to meet when the sun was down; in Moscow and Nijni, prized for their musical gifts, singing and dancing at the cafés and the restaurants attached to the public gardens; indeed, in the former city, a Galitzin did not disdain to make one of them his wife (or rather a Gypsy did not disdain to wed a Galitzin, though it is said that for months, amid the luxuries of his palace, she wept and pined for the liberty and companionship of her kindred); and here, east of the Volga, and almost on the confines of Asia, we found them again.

Part of the mystery which has shrouded the Gypsies since their first appearance in Europe, early in the fifteenth century, has been dissolved. Professor Pott of Halle has shown that their language is nearly allied to the old Sanskrit, and, by the foreign words and idioms it has gained,

he traces something of the route they must have taken to the West. But when or why they left their home in India, and what are the instincts and influences of race and religion, which have made and kept them as they are, will perhaps never be fully known. It is computed that in all the world they number five millions, and they are most numerous in southern Europe. Abhorring confinement and steady labor as they do, and loving the open sky, it seems strange that they should rove these steppes where life cannot be supported without exertion, and where cutting winds and drifting snows make winter a terror to those exposed to their fury. But here was a company of more than fifty resting on the plain, with no visible means of subsistence, yet careless and content as if they had all been kings and queens.

The scene, in its essential features, was such as Scott might have pictured for the band of Meg Merrilies. A group of eight or ten square white tents supported on poles; rude carts standing by with poor old horses fettered and feeding beside them, while over a fire on the ground hung iron pots suspended from a bar upheld by forked sticks

driven into the sod. The men were probably absent on some pilfering expedition or plying their small trades in the town, for we saw only two, who, ill or lazier than the rest, were stretched on a pile of rags at the entrance to one of the tents. As we came opposite them, dogs started up from the earth, growling savagely, and women and children swarmed forth and surrounded our droskies. They were of all ages, from the withered crone whose tanned and wrinkled skin drawn tightly over her bones made her look like a veritable mummy, and set you wondering why the winds of the steppe had not long before blown her away, to the velvet-cheeked, six-months-old baby that laughed and crowed, and held up its fat, brown hands beneath the shelter of its mother's shawl. Fine-limbed and erect, with lustrous hair and piercing eyes, many of them would have been exceedingly handsome but for the hardness and roughness of their lives. Their dress was like that of the poorest Russian peasants, — a wrap of coarse cloth or sheep-skin, — but there was a picturesqueness all their own in the handkerchief tied round the head like a turban, and the shawl draping the well-formed shoulders. All wore earrings and trinkets of some sort, princi-

GYPSY FORTUNE TELLER.

pally colored glass beads, mixed with coral; and one had, attached to her showy necklace, a medal with an image in relief of Christ on the cross, — doubtless a mere unknown amulet to her on whose neck it hung.

An old woman separated herself from the crowd and through our interpreter asked in Russ to tell our fortunes. Looking into her listener's palm and compelling attention by the magnetic fire of her eyes, she poured forth statements and prophecies shrewdly adapted to the apparent age and circumstances of each individual she addressed, and which could hardly be explained except on the supposition that she possessed something of that strange clairvoyant power which makes the thoughts of another as our own. Then they proposed to sing, and forming a circle they broke into a wild, mournful, monotonous strain, while a poor blind girl, whom we had not hitherto seen, came from the nearest tent, and making her way to the middle of the ring, began to dance to the music. It was like the dance we had seen among the Gypsies of the cafés at Moscow and Nijni, only slower and more mysterious in its motion. For a moment she stood as though under a spell; then swayed herself gently

to and fro; then extended her arms as if in supplication; then, poising herself, whirled to the singing like one in an ecstasy of inspiration; and then, exhausted, with drooping head and folded hands, she sank back and was lost in the circle at her side. Instantly another sprang forward, went through the same postures and silent invocations and returned to her place; then another, and another, until nearly all the young women had borne a part, and from weariness both singers and dancers were still. As I watched them, I did not wonder that they have always been accused of magic, and of a league with "the Prince of the Powers of the air." It was not a voluptuous measure, but a weird incantation; and I could but regard it as derived from some ancient religion, some early worship or superstition of their race.

As the circle broke up, two young girls came across the heath, the exact counterparts of the Gypsy of the Prado. Their cheeks were aglow with exercise; their long hair, escaped from confinement, fell in rich masses over their shoulders, and they advanced, chatting gayly to themselves, and eating sunflower seeds which they had gathered from the stalks yet standing in the fields. It

was a picture of simplicity and beauty and health and freedom that carried one back to the youth of the world.

With our farewells we gave them money, which seemed highly to delight them, but just as we drove away, they called after us in an unintelligible dialect, whether with blessings or curses we could not divine. I fancy, however, it was the latter, for at once their dogs set up an angry howl, which did not cease until we were out of sight of tent and common.

THE EMPIRE OF THE EAST.

THE EMPIRE OF THE EAST.

Hail to the glorious morning
  When the Cross again shall shine
On the summit of Saint Sophia,
  O city of Constantine!
And that day of sack and slaughter
  When the wild, despairing cries
Of "Kyrie Eleison!" fainter
  Went wailing up to the skies,
Shall be lost in the splendid triumph
  As the Church reclaims her own,
And the Patriarch welcomes our Lord, the Czar,
  To the Cæsars' ancient throne!

In the sky of the south, at midnight,
  We have seen God's flaming sign,
And we know He will drive the Moslem horde,
  ~~As chaff~~, from his sacred shrine!
Silent will be the muezzin
  As the sun on Asia sets;
Folded the crescent banner;
  Crumbled the minarets.

Then, in the grand Cathedral,
Victorious chants we'll raise,
While the saints look down with loving eyes,
And the gems of the altar blaze.
Hail to the day when the Eagles
And the Cross shall gain their own,
As the Patriarch welcomes our Lord, the Czar,
To the Cæsars' ancient throne!

THE next day was Sunday, and we were wakened by the chimes of the church-towers, bold and clear as the clanging music of the Kremlin. For at every point where Russia rests on her road to the East, by fort and barrack she rears the shrines of her religion, and drowns the muezzin's cry with the louder call of her bells, "To prayer! To prayer! There is no God but God, and the Orthodox Church is his Prophet!"

At the same time she is too broad and politic in her views not to humor the tastes and prejudices of the conquered. Five years ago, when the corner-stone of a Greek church was laid at the newly-acquired city of Tashkend, the ceremonies were followed by a festival with games and races in which the inhabitants delight, and concluded by a banquet for the multitude.

With true Asiatic diplomacy, Russia gives when she would gain; she yields when she seeks submission; and thus, through the unavoidable press of trade, and the necessity for peace on her frontiers and for better communication with distant points; and perhaps still more through her ambition which takes advantage of every favorable opportunity, she has pushed her way till from this former outpost on the Volga she has gone almost to Kuldja and Kashgar; nay, till at one point but a hundred miles intervene between her rule and that of the Rajah of Cashmere; while to the east she has seized upon the Amoor, the great river outlet of central Asia, which for more than two thousand miles rolls through a region rich in forests and pastures, in meadows and mines, down to its mouth, where, guarded now by the guns of the fortress of Nikolaefsk, it pours its majestic tide into the Pacific, at the Okhotsk Sea.

Wherever Russia gains a foothold she raises a fort and lays down a military road, along which, if it be needful, she digs wells; and her daring pioneers, the Cossacks, are both builders and guardsmen. Next she establishes a fair at which the natives can buy or barter after their own fashion, and

speedily the surrounding country is under her control. The Fair of Nijni was opened on what was then the frontier of Asia. The Fair of Irbit is the centre of trade for western Siberia; and through the steppes and all along the Amoor and its affluents, it is at the yermaks (fairs) that the Russian merchants and Cossacks barter their bright cloths and beads and ribbons for the horses and cattle of the Kirghizes; and exchange their flour and powder and lead and whiskey for the fox and squirrel and sable skins of the Toungouz and Goldi and Gelyak hunters.

Since that Sunday morning of 1867, when the bells of Samara brought her victories to mind, she has added "silken Samarcand," the capital of Timour, to her possessions; and so far overcome the "noble Bokhara" that its emir, hereditary "Keeper of the Faith" of Islam, has allowed her to construct three fortresses on the border which virtually command his territory; has given liberty and protection to Russian trade; and has even sent his son to St. Petersburg to beg the Emperor's assistance in securing him succession to the throne — thus declaring himself her vassal. At Tashkend she has established the "Bank of Central Asia," with a

branch at Orenburg, and founded a library where are already gathered many manuscripts important to the history of the region; while a journal, the "Tashkend Messenger," records duly the news of the West and the state of trade along the frontier.

Independent Turkestan will soon cease to exist. Its cities of mysterious and poetic renown will be but garrisons for Russian governors; and the fertile fields of the Oxus and the Jaxartes with their silk, their cotton, their grain, their fruit, and the boundless steppes that stretch away on either hand, yielding herds and flocks innumerable, will be but tributary to Russian commerce and Russian pride.

Perhaps this is but the natural and necessary result of her position. Certainly it is a beneficent change which brings law and order and the germs of a purer religion and a better civilization into this realm of ignorance and reckless rule; and for the progress of the world we may desire the swift coming of the day when the Czar shall be acknowledged as the Great White Khan by all the tribes from the Volga to the mountains of Thibet and the Chinese Wall. But when I read of a scene

like that which the traveller Atkinson describes, where coming towards nightfall to a valley of the Alatau range he was warmly welcomed by a Kirghiz chief who sat at the door of his yourt, in the midst of that superb landscape, with his flocks and herds feeding all about him on the mountain slopes; or of the migration of the tribes and their herds to the high summer pastures; or of the group he encountered at an encampment on the plain, whose patriarch rose to receive him and made room for him on his own carpet where, encircled by his family and followers, he listened to a bard singing before him the brave deeds of his ancestors, — I wish these Turkish, Tartar tribes could be developed and elevated in ways congenial to their own instincts and peculiarities, and not forced to accept our modes of life and thought. In mind and manners and costume the world tends towards a uniformity which is fatal to individuality and picturesqueness. Let the plundering foray and the deadly feud be done away; but perpetuate the daring, the simplicity, the hospitality, the manly exercises and the easy robes of these shepherds of the steppes — inherited, it may be, from the first rover who left his fellows to pitch his tent on the open plain!

Yet it is with her gaze fixed always on the South that Russia advances in the East; and while her word is becoming law for the vast central region beyond the Volga, while she covers the Caspian and the Euxine with her fleets, and from the mountains of the Caucasus and ancient Ararat threatens Asia Minor, she can bide her time for the possession of the Fair City by the Golden Horn.

"How soon," I asked of a Russian on the Black Sea, — "how soon do you think to gain Constantinople?"

"Ah," he replied, "I cannot tell. It may be ten years; it may be a hundred; but *Constantinople is ours.*"

"That will be a proud day when you uncover the frescoes of Justinian on the walls of St. Sophia, and rear the cross above its sacred dome."

"Yes, a proud day for Russia and for the Church. God grant I may live to see it!"

And when the day comes;— when it is Russia from the White Sea to the Sea of Marmora, and from the Carpathians to the Pacific; when the long dream of the Muscovites has become a reality and the Czar's summer palace is by the Bosphorus instead of the Bay of Yalta; when the city of

Constantine is again the head of the Eastern Church, and the glory has come back to St. Sophia — the music, the incense, the splendid ceremonial that dazzled and won the first Russian envoys; and when, with the dignity of the ages and more than the authority of any Romish Vatican, she gives the law to all of her creed — what Power will be the peer of the Empire of the East?

There will be but one. The Power that, like her, calls a continent its own — under whose banner all races dwell securely and every man of them a Czar — whose religion is more Orthodox than the Faith of the Greeks; for, through ordination older than that of bishop or patriarch, each soul is free to find God in its own way — the Power grand as the Empire — the Republic of the West!

THE VOLGA TO KAMYSCHIN.

THE VOLGA, TO KAMYSCHIN.

And still we kept the Volga's tide,
The Volga rolling gray and wide;
While the gulls of the Caspian over it flew,
A flash of silver and jet in the sun,
And, chill though the blast from the Oural blew,
Circled and hovered till day was done.

Faint, in the lulls of the wind, from shore
Came the lowing of herds that roved the plain;
And the bells rang over the water's roar
Calling the hamlet to holy fane.
And slowly the fishers of Astrakhan
Stemmed the current with laden keel;
While the barges the Kama peasants man,
And the barks of the Oka past them ran,
Heaped with iron and wheat and steel;
And as far as the wind could wander free,
On either side was the grassy sea.

THROUGH the broad streets we walked leisurely down to take the afternoon boat which was to leave the wharf at three o'clock. Few

women were to be seen, but groups of men stood on the corners or strolled about, many of them rough, wild looking people with sandals of basket-work and strips of coarse cloth wrapped around their legs. From a cellar a man emerged and strode past us who startled me by his resemblance to a North American Indian; the same brown skin and high cheek bones and straight black hair, with a blanket flung over his shoulders like a true Ute or Pawnee. He was a Kalmuck from the steppe, and, whatever ethnologists may say, his race always vividly recalled the Red man.

On the river again, flowing west now, instead of east, and bearing us with every wave farther from Samara and Orenburg and the strange regions to which they are the gates. Taking a last look at the town stretching along the shore and over the plain, with its great pine warehouses for the reception of grain, its many small dwellings and its lofty churches and barracks, we thought it was not unlike a crude city of the prairies.

The sky was obscured; the air cold; the shores low and objectless. A moonless night followed the leaden day, and the boat anchored for several hours at a small station where wood was taken on — the

heavy sticks falling with such a crash into the hold that sleep was impossible. It is no wonder the Russian forests have grown thin and in some regions disappeared. The cold makes fires a necessity for the greater part of the year, and only wood is used for fuel, while in many provinces dry laths are burned for lights. Nearly all the houses are made of wood; those of the poorer classes of hewn logs. All furniture and household utensils are of wood, and a vast number of young lindens have been annually cut for the manufacture of shoes. Three shoots of three years' growth are required for a single pair, and a workingman will wear out fifty such pairs in a year. Timber is one of the principal articles of inland traffic; the forests of the north and of the Oural supplying the steppes, as with us those of the great lakes do the prairies. But of late the wood lands have received much attention, and now stringent laws regulate the felling of trees. Logs are sawed into planks instead of being wasted by hewing. Leather boots are gradually supplanting bark shoes. Tallow candles are taking the place of torches of birch and pine. In many districts live hedges supersede board fences, and wide tracts are planted with

larches. Now, too, large coal deposits have been found in the basin of the Don, along the Caspian, and on the Kama, near Perm.

As usual we were on our way with the dawn. The shores were flat and sandy, and flocks of dark-winged gulls flew over the river. At ten o'clock we came to Volsk, a town of thirty thousand inhabitants, on the right bank, and the centre of a region of orchards and gardens where the fruits and vegetables suited to the climate are grown and disposed of chiefly at Nijni Novgorod. Here most of the second and third class passengers went ashore to buy black bread and water-melons or cucumbers which were lying in heaps on the bank waiting for purchasers.

Cabbages, cucumbers, and onions are the most common vegetables of Russia, and, either fresh or salted, they form, with the lower classes at least, a part of almost every meal. In all the southern provinces melons of large size and excellent flavor are raised in great numbers and sent from thence up the rivers to the north. What a fine pear or peach is to an American, that a slice of water-melon is to a Russian. Cherries, and apples of varieties brought originally from Astrakhan and

Persia, are common as far north as Vladimir; but, perhaps because it was too early in the season, we saw few that were not small and poor. All the fruits of the temperate zone are grown farther south; and in greenhouses, even north of St. Petersburg, they are brought to perfection. Many small fruits grow wild, and are eaten fresh, and made into sweetmeats and cordials. The marshes of the north are red with cranberries, which supply the place of lemons to the inhabitants; strawberries and blueberries abound, and raspberries, loved of bears and children, ripen everywhere. The director of a band of laborers in a rural district north of Moscow told me that in the raspberry season the men in his employ were desirous to obtain some of the fruit, which was not plenty there. They had noticed that one of the women of the village came home every morning about nine o'clock with her basket full of fine berries. Strangers in the place, they asked her where she found them. She refused to tell, and they determined the next morning to watch and follow her. Suspecting their intention, she was up and off with the dawn; but just as they had risen she came flying back to the village half wild with terror, her

basket gone, her dress torn, and her hair streaming over her shoulders. As soon as she could speak she said that she had walked to the raspberry patch as usual and was quietly filling her basket when just before her she saw an enormous bear standing on his hind legs, and with his fore paws drawing the bushes to his mouth and leisurely devouring the fruit. Leaping to the path, and imagining the bear in close pursuit, she ran at the top of her speed across the fields and never stopped till she had reached her own door. Her secret garden was discovered, but the villagers sought in vain through the summer months for the bear. Perhaps he was reserved for a grander end when in mid-winter the vapor of his breath disclosing to the keen-eyed peasants his den beneath the snow, the Czar himself, in a royal hunt, gave him his death wound. Hazel-nuts are common, and, in the Oural, the spicy nuts of the cedar. Thus, though comparatively little attention is paid to horticulture, the Russians, even of the north, are not so destitute of fruits and vegetables as would at first appear.

Wood was brought on board here by two women fastened together with straps over their shoulders, to which poles, some four feet in length, were at-

ICE-BOAT OF THE VOLGA.

tached, and across these the sticks were laid. Stout and hardy as men, bare-headed, with short, coarse petticoats and loose jackets, they went to and fro till the last load was transferred to the hold, steady and stolid and untiring as well-trained mules or oxen.

Below Volsk the river widens, flowing with a slow, majestic current. As we dropped down its tide great steamers and rafts from Astrakhan and the Caspian passed us on their way to the north, many of them laden with the products of the fisheries. For of all the rivers and seas of the world none are more abundantly stocked with fish than the Volga and the Caspian; indeed, at some seasons, the stream below Astrakhan, and the sea, near its mouth, are literally crowded with the finny tribes. The most important of these are the various species of sturgeon, from the small sterlet, so much in repute for its delicate flavor, to the great belugas which weigh from one to three thousand pounds. All the affluents of the Volga are filled with fish, but those of the cold waters of the Kama are considered best, and there can be no greater table luxury to a Russian than caviare made from the roes of the sterlet of this river. The Tartar name for the Volga is Edel — Plenty.

Everything relating to the fisheries is regulated by law. They employ many thousands of men and boats through a large part of the year, and furnish vast quantities, not only of fresh and cured fish, but also of caviare, isinglass, and oil, for home use and for exportation. Astrakhan is the store-house of the fisheries, and from thence their wealth is distributed over the empire. For some time after the conquest of this Khanate, the fisheries, which had been diligently maintained by the Tartars, were the property of the Church. Then they reverted to the Crown, and later, upon the payment of an annual tribute, they passed into the hands of private companies, but for more than fifty years they have been free to all.

At five o'clock we reached Saratoff, the most populous city on the Volga, with bazaars, annual fairs, and great trade in fish, grain, salt, cattle, leather and skins. Yet, large as it is, it lacks the dignity and beauty of Kazan. Its streets, broad and well-built as they are towards the river, end in forlorn, sandy roads bordered with poor cabins that straggle up the bare, barren slope beyond the town. The Volga here is a superb stream, three miles wide at low water, and fifteen miles during the

floods of spring, when it inundates the low lands to the east.

We took droskies, in form like an Irish jaunting-car, and drove up the steep hill through the principal streets. The bells for some church service were ringing blithe and clear beneath the star-spangled domes of the belfries; but the busy day was not yet over, and only a few women seemed to be responding to the summons. Aside from their natural religious bias, I do not wonder at the devotion of the Russians to their Church; for these lofty towers, with glittering crosses and pealing bells, are often all that the landscape has of beauty and cheer.

Saratoff is famous for its manufactures of silk and leather, and of gold and silver ware. At a jeweler's we found many articles novel in design and exquisite in finish — bells of silver-gilt in the shape of a pear, supported on a branch with leaves; salvers and pitchers rich with clustering flowers in dark enamel, and various personal ornaments of the beautiful crystals of the Oural. Here, too, were well-executed bronze statuettes of Lincoln exposed in the window — the grave, kindly face having the same charm on the Volga as by the Sangamon.

Standing in the handsome square, with gay spires and roofs rising about us, and carriages dashing past, we might quite have admired bustling, ambitious Saratoff, if we could have shut from view the dreary sand-hills and mean huts beyond.

The boat lay all night at her moorings, and having become accustomed to the saloon divan for a couch, we slept quietly beside the noisy bank. The next day was wonderfully clear, with a strong, cold wind blowing from sunrise to sunset, and covering with white waves the broad, gray river. The shores were low, scarcely above the water's edge, or else mere sandy bluffs stretching off to the plain. All day the most noticeable objects were the great herds of cattle, sometimes feeding near the brink, sometimes just visible on the horizon. Yet this monotonous region has been the scene of more migrations, tumults, battles, and piracies than almost any other on earth. For we were now parallel to that open space of nearly three hundred miles between the Caspian and the Oural; the gate through which the tribes of Asia have always poured into Europe, from the

first adventurers timidly entering unknown lands, to the fierce Huns, the hordes of Genghis and Timour, and the later companies of Kalmucks, Turkomans, and Tartars roaming to and fro as fancy or necessity might decide. As the gusty wind swept over the boat, the shouts of Hun and Mongol and Tartar, and the shrieks and death-cries of their victims, seemed to live and linger in its wail.

Under a splendid sunset we came to anchor at Kamyschin, a small place with the usual barracks, and warehouses for grain. As at Volsk, heaps of melons and poor apples were for sale on the bank, and a flight of steep stairs led to the streets beyond. For at the breaking up of winter the Volga becomes an inland sea, and thus, as on the Mississippi, the highest points are selected for the towns. As we walked about we heard that a theatrical company had arrived, and would give a performance at eight o'clock, admittance one ruble. Glad of a little variety, tickets were purchased, and just before the time we went to the designated building. A crowd of shabbily dressed people stood about and looked on with evident envy, as the door-keeper made

way for us and handed us two programmes of the entertainment, written with a pen, in Russ, and each covering two pages of foolscap. For all the good they did us, he might as well have furnished us with a list of the plays in the moon. I doubt if the alphabet of that, or any other orb, would be so tormenting to the American eye as is the written Russ, with its letters so like, and yet so unlike our own, deluding and baffling at every line. It was a barn-like structure into which we entered; its floor of earth and its seats rude benches. An audience of perhaps a hundred people, half of them army officers with their families, waited the opening of the entertainment. Eight o'clock came, but the fall of faded calico, which hid the stage and wavered in the wind that found entrance on every side, refused to rise. Voices as in angry altercation were heard behind it, now repressed, now rising with the passion of the speaker; and although profane swearing is almost unknown in Russia, if we had been familiar with the language we should doubtless have heard some astonishing epithets. Ten, fifteen, twenty minutes passed thus, while the three weary musicians laid down their instruments, and the candles flared and the

curtain trembled in the draught. The seats were hard; the sandy floor cold; yet there was no calling, or hissing, or stamping of feet, but all, in patient silence, waited the pleasure of the performers. At length, their quarrels over, there was a stir and rustle, and the thin screen rose slowly, disclosing a farm-house interior, with a pretty young girl in peasant costume standing by the table in earnest conversation with her lover, who was evidently agitated and fearful of being discovered by the family. I could not see how their wooing was in aught different from that of the lovers of the West, or their grief less heart-breaking than theirs, when the enraged father burst in and, rudely seizing his daughter, compelled the young man to fly. The action was natural and spirited, and the audience listened with closest attention. But as only now and then a word was intelligible to us, the cold got the better of our enthusiasm, and we left at the end of the first act, without waiting to see whether Romeo and Juliet went forward to a wedding or a funeral.

The throng outside was greater than when we came — poor people, to whom a ruble was a little fortune, pushing close to the door that they might

catch some word or hint of the delight within. For a love of music and the drama is the birth-gift of the Slavonians, though, in cultured guise, they have been, thus far, almost out of the reach of any but the upper classes. But with the new life of the nation, art in all its manifestations will gradually come to be a universal inheritance, and only the future can show what rare forms grace and beauty and harmony will assume with this people whose development has hardly begun, and in whom the European and the Asiatic are so subtly blended.

Over the western steppes the wind had gone down with the sun, and as, in the darkness, we descended the stairs and crossed the platform to the boat, there was no sound but the ripple of the river beneath her bows.

KALMUCKS AND MORAVIANS.

KALMUCKS AND MORAVIANS.

Farewell, O River of the Plain,
O River of the Sea!
Fain would I follow to the main
Thy current strong and free;
And find, beyond thy reedy islands,
The sullen Caspian's ocean silence.

The Kalmuck girls with braided hair,
And cap of scarlet crown,
Beside their tents, in evening fair,
Will watch thy tide go down;
And songs of the steppe and its rovers sing,
Their swarthy lovers listening.

And Kirghis, dark with desert suns,
Will halt beside thy brink,
While the steed, the brackish spring that shuns,
Stoops low, thy wave to drink;
Then, fresh and fleet as at dawn of day,
Over the plain they'll haste away.

Farewell. I feel the west wind blow;
The Asian dream is o'er;

And Europe 's in the sunset glow,
That gilds thy sandy shore.
I go where other streams will shine,
But none so lone, so grand as thine.

WE had purposed keeping the Volga as far as Astrakhan, that we might see something of the City of the Islands, and of the seventy arms by which the great river discharges its waters; but the season was unhealthy along the Caspian, and reluctantly the plan was abandoned.

At eleven o'clock the next morning we reached Tzaritsin, from whence we were to find our way south by the railway, seventy-five versts in length, to Kalatch on the Don, and thence by steamer down that river. Too late, however, for the morning train, we decided to go twenty miles farther on the Volga to Sarepta, returning in the evening.

The country about Tzaritsin is fertile and attractive, compared with the arid, saline steppes and marshes of the lower river. In April, which is here the loveliest month of the year, the fields and plains are bright with crocuses and red and yellow tulips, and rich with succulent grasses, luxurious food for the herds that, unhoused, have supported the cold of winter. But the hot winds from the

southeast soon destroy the verdure, and the earth is parched and bare till autumn rains bring forth a new generation of plants and flowers. On our right was the rolling plain reaching to the Don; on our left the wide and barren steppe of the Oural, still called the Kalmuck steppe, from its occupation by the Mongolian horde that in the latter part of the last century took the long march to Chinese Tartary rather than submit to the rule of the Russians. Since then their old conquerors have taken a long march also, and the followers of Buddha only postponed their fate. The thousands whom various circumstances compelled to remain, are scattered over the country between the Sea of Azoff and the Kirghiz frontier.

This region was once the residence of the Tartar Golden Horde, and ruins are yet found, a little way to the east, where their capital is fabled to have stood. Near the river, plantations of mulberry trees, now mixed with other growths of the forest, and of which the Russians have no record, survive to tell of their skillful industry. The trees still bring forth leaves and fruit, but where are the Khans clad in silk and glittering with gems, whose word was law over these steppes and streams?

And whither have they fled, the dark-eyed beauties, with braided hair and flowing robes, who ministered to their delight?

Wherever the shore was low and open, we had glimpses of a country burnt and brown as California at midsummer, but without the evergreen oaks which in that American Asia preserve always the memory of spring. On the steppe, to the east, grow wild rue, and a species of wormwood not unlike the sage-brush of our western plains. Heath hens, and small, fleet antelopes feed on it during the season of drought; while the reedy marshes along the river are filled with water-fowl that subsist upon the small grains and seeds of their various plants and grasses.

Of the many German colonies along the Volga, Sarepta is perhaps the most important. It was founded a hundred years ago as a Moravian missionary station among the Kalmucks, and was then the only settlement between Tzaritsin and Astrakhan. To guard it from the incursions of wandering tribes it was fortified, and had the protection of a small resident garrison. Rare privileges were granted it by the Imperial government; for then, as now, wherever Germans were found, there was

the nucleus of a better civilization. Priestly efforts to bring the Kalmucks into the Orthodox communion interfered with the religious plans of the colony, but in material things it is both prosperous and influential.

We landed at a wooden pier, near which was a small station-house that overhung the water, and in an open wagon rode over the two or three versts that lay between the river and the town. The soil was sandy, and part of the way a growth of low oaks and pines lined the road. The village, with its yellow houses built about a square, looks thoroughly German, and a little like a settlement of Shakers. Its five hundred inhabitants are a most industrious, thrifty community. From their cattle, their fisheries, their flax and tobacco, their manufactures of cotton and linen fabrics, of soap and of brandy, they derive an excellent income; and among the idle, ignorant population about them they are a perpetual proof of the advantages of intelligent labor. They employ their Kalmuck neighbors in the fields and as herdsmen whenever they can obtain them, but it is only at intervals that this people, whose wants are so few, will forsake the lazy quiet which is to them the first of luxuries.

Wishing to have a sight of these Russian Mongols, relics of the half million that followed their Khan back to the pastures of Central Asia, we took a Moravian guide and drove straight through the town to the steppe beyond — the great rolling plain that loses itself in the salt waves of the Caspian. At the distance of a verst we came to some of their tents or yourts; round frames of wood covered with skins, with a curtain of skin hanging before the opening — just such habitations as shelter their kindred in Mongolia and Tartary, and which for ages have not changed their shape or size. We entered several and were pleasantly received by the inmates. The space within was like that of an ordinary room, and the only furniture a wooden chest or two, and sheep-skins and blankets serving as carpets by day and beds by night. On the ground, in the middle of the tent, was a fire of roots and dry dung, burning without blaze but with a steady glow, and about it the inmates reclined or sat cross-legged, the elder women at work upon some of their coarse garments, and the half-grown children and the few men present lolling about in absolute idleness. They were very dark but had a rich color with straight, jet-black

A KALMUCK ENCAMPMENT.

hair, and in spite of the flat nose and high cheek bones some of them were really handsome. If the Huns were Kalmucks, and Herodotus pictures them truly, the race, judging from those of Sarepta, has vastly improved since his day. As we entered one tent a young girl retreated timidly to the farther side and stood, regarding us, in an attitude which was grace itself. Her features were less marked than those of her companions, and in every glance and movement there was a soft languor as charming as it was un-European. She doubtless wore, like all the rest, a long garment tied loosely about the waist; but I only remember her easy pose and the high cap of scarlet and yellow beneath which her dark hair descended to her shoulders. Such a Mongol maiden must have been the bride of the earth-spirit — the fabled virgin mother of the great Genghis; and in this Kalmuck girl of the Volga I fancied I saw again the flowering of her race.

All the men and women wore earrings, — some of them a large ring in one ear only, — and on their heads a lamb-skin turban, those of the women having a centre of bright cloth. The very young children rolled about, nearly naked, upon the skins

before the fire, while the elder amused themselves outside and seemed much pleased with the gift of a few kopecks and confections.

These Mongolians are probably on the way to civilization, but, undeveloped as they are, in the tameness and security of their present life they are far less interesting than their Asiatic kindred, to whom daring bravery and skill in horsemanship, in the chase, and in arts of defense and aggression, are necessities of existence. Any one is a prince among them who possesses flocks of sheep; and their severest malediction is, "May you live in one place and work like a Russian!"

As we walked away we saw sheep-skins stretched over poles, and rows of flat cakes of dung set up to dry in the sun, but neither grain, nor shrub, nor flower planted by the hand of man. A few horses fed on the brown grass at the edge of the pine woods, and in front was the interminable plain.

It was a pleasant change from the Mongol tents to the quaint, neat parlor of the Moravian hotel, with its plain, ancient furniture and blue-painted walls. Here we had lunch — toast and tea, with new-laid eggs and bacon — served by a comely

maiden in a checked cotton dress, with her fair hair braided and coiled in true German fashion. Everything about the house bespoke order, thrift, and extreme simplicity. Good water was brought in pipes from a spring a mile distant, and about every house were vegetable gardens. Kindly, industrious people are these Moravians; and if they are not now the earnest propagators of their faith they were a hundred years since, as agriculturists and peaceful, moral citizens they are still missionaries.

At six o'clock we went back to the river to meet the boat for Tzaritsin. In the small cabin by the pier lived a Russian and his wife whose charge it was to attend to the passengers and freight of the landing. The woman, stout and florid, was a very rainbow in attire. She had a green skirt with a red waist; a bright plaid apron; blue and yellow beads and earrings, and a pink cap with purple strings; and from their midst her round, smiling face beamed like the full moon.

We sat by the window looking down the broad river towards Astrakhan and watching for the steamer. On the platform without were two or three peasants catching silver fish — tiny creatures, like sardines for size, that glittered in the sun as

they were drawn up the high bank and thrown into the waiting basket. There was no sound but the dash of the river against the shore. A few laden rafts went by, and steamers upward bound that did not deign to call at Sarepta. The sun sank in a blaze of gold with a flush of the same hue over all the horizon, prolonged till twilight and the coming of the stars. The air grew chill, and the good-natured woman brought her shining samovar and made us tea. At eight o'clock we learned definitely that through some delay there would be no boat till morning, and in a peasant's wagon we returned to the village.

It was eighteen versts — twelve miles — across the country to Tzaritsin, and we resolved to ride over. A carriage was soon made ready ; a roomy affair with four horses abreast and a Moravian driver. There was no moon, but the night was clear and cold, with innumerable stars, and rapidly we sped along the wide, dusty road, over the rolling plain ; dismounting twice, at tributaries of the Volga, to walk across the bridges which were deemed unsafe for a heavy carriage. I never remember having such a sense of remoteness and isolation from my accustomed world as during

that evening ride. One or two hamlets were passed with lights twinkling through their windows, and, at a turn of the road, some loaded teams plodding their way to the south; but most of the distance the earth lay as void beneath the sky, and the wind blew over it as mournfully, as if it had never known the presence of man.

At midnight, descending the slope towards the river, we reached Tzaritsin. Felicitating ourselves upon rest and quiet after the fatigues of the day, we hastened through the empty streets only to learn that the single hotel had been burned a short time previous, and that the only place where we could spend the night was the railway station. At the station then we alighted; said good-night to the skillful driver; returned with thanks the warm wrappings which the kind villagers had furnished us; and entered the door to find what cheer we could in the upright wooden chairs and bare benches of the great saloon.

Even now it gives me a feeling of weariness to think of the utter discomfort of that night. There was a ladies' room, but it was crowded with mothers, nurses, and crying children; and the large apartment where men were coming and going,

public though it was, was far more inviting. Here then, upon bench or chair, we disposed ourselves, with officers, Cossacks, peasants, and Tartars for companions; some snoring, some pouring forth a tide of Russ in narration and argument. Now and then there would come a lull when even the sleepers drew their breath quietly; but just as I was lapsing into grateful oblivion a child would scream, or the great door opening on to the street slam with unusual violence; and when at last I sank into momentary slumber it was to dream that I was in a Kalmuck tent arrayed in the tunic and high cap of the women — that the tribe was about to migrate to the plains of Tartary — and that through searching for my lost silver necklace I was in danger of being left to the vengeance of the Russians.

So the long hours wore away until daylight looked in through the unshaded windows and the whole caravanserai was awake and astir. O the easy toilets of those shaggy fellows! A settling into the enormous boots; a shake of the head, the fingers running through the matted hair; a tightening of the girdle about the loose caftan; and they were ready for the day. One by one the mothers and nurses appeared with the children, most of

them now in good-humor. The waiters set the steaming samovars upon the deal tables, and soon all were busy making and drinking tea, sipping it from glass tumblers and holding the sugar in the hand as is the universal custom. This, with bread cut from the loaf — often with a knife carried in the belt — and perhaps a water-melon, not delicately scooped out as with us, but eaten close to the rind, made up the meal.

Walking in the breezy open court to dispel the heaviness of the night, we heard the shrill whistle of the locomotive, and at seven o'clock went on board the train for Kalatch.

Farewell to the noble current of the Volga! Unwatched of our eyes it would go down to the sea, while westward we followed its neighbor river to the Euxine.

THE COSSACK COUNTRY.

THE COSSACK COUNTRY.

The Cossack! the Cossack! his steed is his throne;
On the steppe and the desert his glory is known;
For he sweeps like the wind from the camp to the fray,
And woe to the foe and the flying that day!
"False Pagan!" he cries, "are you slave — are you Shah —
Now die by this lance, or take oath to the Czar!"

The Cossack! the Cossack! a flame of the South
Is the glance of his eye, is the word of his mouth,
For the steed that he rides — for the saint he implores —
And, fairer and dearer, the girl he adores.
The maiden's fond lover — the Czar's faithful warder —
Ho! drink to the Cossack, from border to border!

THE old Tartar Khans, and after them Peter the Great, tried to construct a canal near Tzaritsin, uniting the Volga and the Don. Intervening granite ridges and the lawless population of the region caused them to abandon the work. The railway, fifty miles long, which now connects them, — the only one in southeastern Russia except the

line nearly completed from Samara to Orenburg,— was built by an American company, and two trains run over it daily upon the arrival of the boats. The only water communication between the Black Sea and the Caspian is a canal leading from the Don, near its source, to the Oka which joins the Volga at Nijni Novgorod.

A sandy, rolling, wind-blown plain stretches from river to river, with neither trees nor marked undulations except along the borders of the streams, which run in deep ravines. Wild thyme and rue grow here in abundance; and melons, everywhere cultivated, thrive wonderfully in the light, warm soil. Here and there were hamlets of rude houses, bare upon the plain, and great flocks of sheep cropping the coarse, brown grass. A little before ten o'clock a line of verdure appeared on the western horizon, and a few minutes later we reached Kalatch, by the Don. The commodious station was close to the river bank, and, descending the long stairs, we found the boat lying at the wharf and not to leave until the next morning.

At Kalatch, a small town owing its existence to the railway, the Don is divided by an island, and where the boat lay it was a narrow stream, looking

insignificant indeed compared with the majestic tide of the Volga. All was quiet about. The few passengers, all Russians, who had come over with us, dropped into their appointed places on deck or in the cabin, and betook themselves to rest with Oriental resignation. A pile of bales and boxes was being leisurely stowed away on board, the stout porters moving as if they knew they had the day before them. So, also, moved the pliant waiter of whom we ordered breakfast and dinner in one. "Directly," was his amiable response, and in exactly three hours we were summoned to the table.

Towards evening we went on shore and walked about the town. The wide, dusty road leading to it was hardly browner than the sod; and the coarse grass, undisturbed by shrub or flower, grew to the very doors. There were perhaps twenty good houses of hewn logs built by the Government; all the rest were poor cabins. It was market time in the central square, but there was little offered that was inviting, and no fruit except small, sour apples at five kopecks apiece. However, business hours were nearly over, and the only customers we saw were two old women hobbling home with their bread and cucumbers, and several rough dogs hanging about the meat stall.

With the late train came a multitude of passengers filling our boat to its utmost capacity. The deck was crowded with people wrapped in sheepskins and coarse blankets, and carrying their provisions — tea, black bread, and often dried fish and melons. The saloon, where we were already established, was appropriated to the "first class" lady voyagers, who came in with exclamations of fatigue, and, throwing off their travelling garments, slipped into the amplest of dressing-gowns, and sinking down on the pillows they had brought, abandoned themselves to the luxury of cigarettes. I had already become accustomed to the sight of women smoking. Indeed, I doubt if ever Turk or Russian was more devoted to tobacco than a lady from Bucharest, elegant in person and attire, who went with us up the Danube, and who spent the most of her time in the close cabin below, that she might indulge in her favorite habit. One morning when we were passing through a beautiful district, I went down, and seeing her sitting in a cloud of smoke said to her, —

"The air is delicious this morning, Madame, and the views on shore charming. Will you not come on deck a little while?"

"Thank you," she replied, in languid French, "but I prefer my cigarette."

One of these Russians perhaps might have rivaled her, — an elderly woman with a gentle face and white, taper fingers that seemed quite at home in the nice art of rolling up the precious, pulverized leaves, — for when she was not smoking or sleeping, with her slips of paper and her pretty bag filled with fragrant Latakia, she was thus preparing to smoke.

At six o'clock the next morning the steamer was under way. All was animation on board. The officers and crew, calling and answering each other, had enough to do to keep the channel; the cabin passengers, having their own provisions, were busy with breakfast; while those on deck, accustomed to sleep upon bench and stove, or in summer upon the ground in the open air, sprang up, elastic, from the hard floor and addressed themselves to their bread and tea. We soon passed the island and came into the full river, but it was still so much narrower than the Volga that it seemed but an ordinary stream. Rising in a small lake in the government of Tula, the Don, once the eastern boundary of Europe, winds south a thousand miles,

and, receiving eighty tributaries, empties by several mouths into the Sea of Azoff. Full of sand banks and islands, it runs usually with a calm, shallow current, but it is subject to violent inundations, when it converts the low shores into morasses and allows large ships to ascend hundreds of miles. In its valley are some of the most fertile lands of Russia, and forests of oak and pine accompany it through much of its course.

We had not gone far before the keel scraped the sand and we were aground. Overboard jumped the crew, and standing up to their knees in water, aided the engine with pushing and prying and screaming till the boat was clear again. This scene was repeated frequently during the day, and the men appeared to be as much at home in the river as on deck. At ten o'clock we stopped at a small town where the steward and many of the passengers went ashore to buy bread, sweet and white. Here also we found grapes, enormous clusters but scarcely ripe, and melons which all on board seemed to be eating for the rest of the day. The shores were low and bordered partly with trees, apparently willows, while between the verdure and the water was often a line of snowy sand.

This is the land of the Don Cossacks, who furnish the army with more than seventy regiments and batteries of cavalry and horse artillery. Most individual of Russians, their country was for centuries the battle-ground of Pole and Muscovite, of Turk and Tartar, and they would have been driven out or exterminated if they had not possessed a genius for war. The Tartar term Cossack — light-armed warrior — refers not to race but to mode of life. It is, with those who bear it, a name of honor, and any one of whose valor they are assured may be received as one of the tribe. Thus Mazeppa was adopted and in time chosen as chief. Their Headman is the Crown Prince, but all inferior rulers they elect from their own people without dependence upon the Government. Daring courage with them constitutes nobility. All are brothers and their lands are in common. Darker than the north-Russians, with full beards, which even the authority of Peter the Great could not force them to give up, the impetuous fire of their ancestors still burns in their blood and glows in their eyes. Exempt from taxation, from fifteen years old to sixty they are liable to military service as cavalry soldiers, and no Arab of the desert is

more at home upon his steed than these sons of the steppe upon theirs. They conquered Siberia. They lead the way in Central Asia. They garrison the forts, and keep the ever-advancing frontiers of the East and South. Woe to the foe, Christian or Mohammedan, when with lances in rest, and banners bright with their patron saints, shouting, they dash to the charge!

Their religion is that of Olga and Vladimir. They reverence the usages and cling to the superstitions of the Ancient Faith, counting reform sacrilege. No village of theirs but has its church and chime; no house but shrines its sacred picture; no soldier but goes to battle with the cross and the image of his guardian saint pressed to his breast.

Trained to war, they pay little attention to agriculture. Those near the river draw their support largely from the fisheries, and those on the steppe from their flocks and herds, while whatever arts and manufactures exist among them are in the hands of strangers. Their villages are rudely fortified, and in regions exposed to plunder the cattle are, for safety, driven nightly within the inclosure. Each house has its garden for grapes and melons, and perhaps its patch of corn.

It was pleasant to breathe the air of this wild land which had known neither serf nor lord, and to whose people liberty and peril are one; for something of primitive nature lingers still in every breast and creates instant sympathy with the ex hilaration, the freedom, the simplicity of life in the saddle, the tent, the plain. The winds blowing from the steppe had floated their banners on a hundred fields. The horses that neighed or bounded away from the river brink at our approach, amid the wastes of Asia might bear their masters swift to victory, and then to fort or mountain pass, safe from the vengeful foe. The deep-mouthed dogs, baying from the hamlets, would defend the camp with their lives should Kalmuck or Kirghiz marauder dare to enter.

The boat anchored for the night at a little village whose straw-thatched roofs were just visible from the deck.

Dawn ushered in the last day of summer, and on a broader but still shallow river, with posts driven here and there to mark the sand-bars, we held our way to the south. Many birds were about the shores — cranes, herons, ducks, and various wild

fowl, hovering over the water or solemnly watching for fish along its margin. As the boat approached they took wing and, following the stream, alighted long reaches in advance; and thus, alternately resting and flying, some of them accompanied us half the morning.

There are no large towns near this part of the river, and the villages are quite unlike those of the Volga. Instead of square cabins, all of hewn logs or rough boards, the houses are like a tent in shape and their steep roofs are thatched with straw, so that it is often difficult to distinguish them from the large hay-stacks with which they are interspersed.

All day the rolling plain stretched away on either hand with herds, and hamlets, and scattered cornfields, and now and then a wind-mill lifting its arms to the air. Towards night, however, there appeared on the right a range of low, sandy hills, divided by ravines and dotted with thatched cottages — a peculiar, dreary scene, yet pleasing here from its novelty. The grass was greener than to the north, and great companies of cattle and horses were feeding on the lower slopes. This was a suburb of Constantinovka, and passing a bend of the river we came to the town, an assemblage of the same thatched houses with a few better structures.

Here we exchanged our small, flat-bottomed boat for one larger and more agreeable. The amusing scenes we had witnessed before were repeated — people, high and low, hurrying back and forth with pillows and blankets and bags of sugar and tea — only that now the crowd was greater and Oriental dislike of haste had to yield to the necessity of securing sofa and deck-room. Plump went a pillow into the water. Down the gangway rolled the precious lumps that would have sweetened many a glass of tea. Blankets trailed along the planks and were trodden under foot of the throng. And the bewildered victims seemed to take it all as part of the penalty of travelling by steam!

ROSTOFF AND THE LOWER DON.

ROSTOFF AND THE LOWER DON.

O placid Don! I see thee flow
With shallow, snowy-sanded stream,
While light the steppe-winds o'er thee blow,
And cranes and gray-winged herons dream —
Safe as beside some dark lagoon —
Along thy banks in breezeless noon.

The Cossack wanders from thy shore,
But never finds a wave so fair;
Thy summer lapse, thy winter roar,
Still greet him in remotest air;
And death is sweet if he may lie,
With cross above, thy waters by.

A COMPANY of people dark of skin and eyes and hair were on the shore as the boat came to anchor. Observant, yet indifferent, they chatted a moment over the new comer and then strode away, careless, it seemed, whether we went up or down the river. A mounted herdsman, in slouched hat and sheep-skin jacket, drove his horses down to

the stream to drink, and halted a few feet from the landing. Sitting in his saddle, he looked straight before him, and when the last colt lifted its head, satisfied, from the water, he turned about and followed his charge away without having deigned to bestow upon us a single glance.

Several women came on board here, adding to our number in the saloon. Black-eyed, stout, and vivacious, they had evidently journeyed from the interior, for they were brown with dust, and the waiting-maid was at once summoned to assist them at their toilets. Hastily laying aside their wide-waisted gowns (with the exception of those who in towns and cities follow French fashions, the Russian women seem to believe in the old Muscovite idea that it is immodest for a woman to let the form of her waist be seen, or to go with her hair uncovered), they stood in turn before the one basin while the patient girl poured the water for their ablutions — not at once into the bowl, but in a small stream over their hands as they washed; running water being here, as throughout the East, considered necessary to cleanliness and purity. All this without the least interruption to their voluble Russ, which seems, in the South, a softer language than one hears above Kazan.

Gradually the boat grew quiet. Night came on. The last loiterer left the bank, and the only sounds heard from shore were the occasional barking of dogs and the distant lowing of cattle.

The next morning ushered in September, but with us it was going towards summer, for every day brought milder air. The river-shores were still low and the distance varied by sandy ridges alive with water-fowl. It was Sunday, but there was nothing on board the steamer to distinguish it from the rest of the week.

In our descent we passed, on the right, the mouth of the small river Aksäi. Staroi Tcherkask, the former Cossack capital, is on an island formed by this tributary and the Don; but it was so often inundated that early in this century a new site was chosen, twelve miles up the Aksäi, and Novo Tcherkask became the capital of the country. The new town, away from the Don and unloved of the people, grows slowly. The old town, refusing to die, has still some fifteen thousand inhabitants, while its Greek and Armenian merchants carry on a brisk trade in the products of the fisheries and the wine from the neighboring vineyards. The one

with broad regular streets, with barracks and library and imposing cathedral, is Imperial. The other, with narrow lanes, and thatched houses, and dirt, and dogs, and inundations, is Cossack.

At four o'clock we reached Rostoff, at the head of the delta of the Don, and twenty miles above the Sea of Azoff; the most important town on the river, and the centre of trade for all this part of Russia. A hundred years ago a strong fort was built here as a store-house for munitions of war, — Fort St. Dimitri, — and about it the town has grown. Government has favored it and made it also a depot of provisions for the army, the fortresses of the Caucasus, and the eastern shores of the Black Sea; and now, with the adjacent Armenian town of Nakitchevan, it has some fifty thousand inhabitants. Stretching along the river, its great stacks of wool and skins, of timber and bark and leather heaped close to the shore, with its large warehouses, barracks, and churches, and the activity everywhere displayed, show its life and importance.

The Armenians, driven from their own country by wars and oppressions, are found everywhere in eastern Europe, and are especially numerous in

A COSSACK BOY.

Russia, with whose people they easily fraternize on account of the similarity of their Church creeds. Their capacity for trade is such, that a Turkish proverb says: "A Copt, two Greeks, and three Jews are required to deceive an Armenian." They are merchants, bankers, agents, peddlers. They manufacture woolen cloths and silks and jewelry, and everywhere by their quickness and sagacity they become prominent in commercial and financial affairs. Through the Armenian colonies of Mosdok, Kisliar, and Astrakhan, those of Nakitchevan obtain rice, silk, wine, brandy, and all the other productions of the Caucasus; and by frequenting the fairs of the provinces bordering upon the Don they have come, in large measure, to control the business of the region. Handsomest of races, you rarely see one among them that is not comely, and many are of striking beauty, — the eyes large and mournful, the nose prominent but finely outlined, the mouth small and sweet. They formed more than half the busy crowd at the Rostoff landing, and to their dark, delicate faces the coarser Cossack physiognomy was an admirable foil. If their ancient king Ara possessed in royal degree the charms of his people, with an unsusceptible

heart, it is no marvel he won the passionate, destroying love of Semiramis.

The boat, which would not go below Rostoff, was in a few minutes deserted of its passengers, and we found it then so quiet and pleasant that we decided to remain on board till morning. At sunset we walked up the long slope into the town. There were many tall, noticeable public buildings, but most of the dwelling-houses were small structures, painted yellow, with thatched roofs and clumsy blinds at the windows. At the crest of the ridge on which the town is built was an open square, from whence we had a broad view over the river and the plain bathed in the rosy light. Here was a market and a church with beautiful green, star-spangled domes. The doors were open and we went in. Service was over, but a few late worshippers lingered at the shrines whose saints lost something of their grimness in that mellow gleam, and shone resplendent, if not merciful, from their settings of gold and silver. An odor of incense lingered in the air which the fresh breath from the river could not dispel. The conventional pictures of the Last Judgment and the Councils were on the walls, but altogether, with its side windows and its bright col-

ors, it was the most cheerful church interior we had seen in Russia — most of the churches, fine as is the exterior, being so dark and gloomy as to sadden rather than elevate the soul. In the square without, companies of people, chatting and laughing, walked to and fro; and a drunken man, the second we had chanced to see in the country, reeled down the street and disappeared in a cellar; but there was no noise or disorder. Opposite the church was a fruit-booth kept by an Armenian, his glowing face well set off by the piles of lemons and oranges about him. Among his stores were great baskets of grapes from the early vintage, the native plums of the Don, and the berries of the wild rose. The sun had gone down as we descended the hill, but, shining as it might have shone on the Hudson, in its stead was the crescent moon, and under its soft rays we betook ourselves to slumber.

No more fair-haired Russians. The multitude on the Taganrog steamer where we embarked next morning was a blending of the Tartar, Cossack, Greek, and Circassian peoples, inhabitants of these southern shores. The change was pleasant to the eye tired of the pale, blonde races that look faded and expressionless beside these children of the sun.

We were now in the delta of the Don, and as the day was fine, we sat on the upper deck that we might command the view. While I write, I recall the exhilaration of that morning, dropping down an unknown river to an unknown sea. The broad stream was full of turns and windings, and its shores enlivened by a succession of small towns and villages similar to those we had seen in its upper course. Great herds of horses and gray cattle stood along the banks and in the water, and sometimes the keepers with them up to their necks in the flood, as if it were the luxury that the Nile is to the Egyptians. Fishermen were busy with their nets, and gulls and myriad wild fowl wheeled and poised above, intent upon the waves. At one point we passed a small boat filled with women, towed by a horse which a boy was riding along the bank. The little craft swayed with the current and seemed in constant danger of overturn or collision; but its inmates, wrapped in rough jackets and with handkerchiefs tied over their heads, appeared as much at ease as if seated on the floors of their own cabins. Sloops and sailboats of every kind became numerous. The country grew flatter till at length it was a green plain

scarcely above the level of the water. The river spread itself like a tranquil lake, and soon, rounding a curve, in the distant horizon wave and sky were one, and lo! we had passed from the Don to the Azoff Sea!

THE AZOFF AND EUXINE SEAS.

THE AZOFF AND EUXINE SEAS.

Saw you ever face so fearless,
  Saw you ever face so fair,
As the young Circassian's yonder,
  Gazing, mournful, into air?
How his glance, his kingly carriage,
  Shame the Mongols couched below! —
Bliss to her who'll call him lover;
  Death to him who'll find him foe.

Shade of Helen! there 's a Greek girl
  Might have dazzled Priam's son!
With such eyes, such shining tresses,
  Was thy Trojan bold, undone!
And if Paris were as princely
  As the Persian by her side,
All the gods might give thee pity,
  Though a royal Spartan's bride.

O these Border-Lands of Asia!
  What is in their sun, their air,
That the women grow so beauteous,
  That the men such grandeur wear?

Not the Lily loved of Odin,
(Palest brow and daintiest mouth,)
Mates the dark Levantine maiden,
Blossom of the glowing South!

WHEN we reached Taganrog the dust was whirling through its streets, and as there is nothing there of especial interest but the room in which Alexander I. breathed his last, we went directly on board the steamer for Kertch.

Taganrog was founded by Peter the Great, as a port for the South. In his time a decrease was noticed in the waters of the Sea of Azoff, and since, through sand brought down by the Don, it has grown, in this vicinity, so shallow that ships lie off a league from land, and divide their cargo among small boats which convey it ashore, or perhaps are met half-way by carts driven out to relieve them of their load. At present the chief business of Taganrog is the transfer of military stores to the Caucasus, but year by year its trade is slipping away to Kertch and Rostoff.

Early the next morning we began our voyage to the south. The day was fine, the sea smooth, and as we skirted its western border the land was almost constantly in view on our right, with the

churches, as along the rivers, the most conspicuous objects. This sea has nowhere a depth of more than fifty feet, while in many parts it is much less. When a strong wind blows from shore, its adjacent bed is sometimes laid bare, and ships are at once aground, but as its bottom is a soft mud they are rarely injured. It abounds in fish, which are among the principal exports of its towns, — hence its Tartar name, Balik Denghis,— Fish Sea.

All day the sun shone warm, and for the first time in Russia the thick clothing, so necessary farther north, began to be uncomfortable. Late in the afternoon we came to Marienpol, a town with an extensive trade. The Greek blood of its early colonists showed in the features and the picturesque attire of the boatmen busy with transferring freight to the hold of our steamer. I remember especially one man as he leaned over the boat, — his feet bare, his wide trousers rolled up to the knee and confined at the waist by a girdle, his scarlet shirt open at the throat, and his dark eyes and clustering hair made more remarkable by a straw hat, the brim loosely braided, and the unsplit strands gathered into a point to form the crown, and finished with a gay silken tassel. Here, among other things,

we took on board various jars filled with butter, for the use of the Emperor's household at Yalta. I noticed them because each cover was fastened with a seal. Everything is sealed in Russia, even the padlocks of the boxes for the poor in the churches the people, it is said, thinking it a small sin to pick a lock, but having a regard for seals.

Towards evening the sea became literally "a sea of glass," with neither ripple nor foam, but only a gentle sway and swell. Many ships with white, listless sails, stood here and there motionless on the flood. The sky was perfectly clear, and after the sun went down it was a great vault of changing blue and crimson, faint and warm, with every tint reflected in the sea, so that one could scarcely tell where wave ended and atmosphere began.

The next morning we were at Kertch, on the straits of Yeni Kalé, the quarantine station and the most important town of the Sea of Azoff. Though still a busy place, with exports of corn and wool, of salt from the adjacent lakes, and of fish from its own waters, it has never recovered from its bombardment during the Crimean war. Fortunately its valuable collection of antiquities had been previously removed to St. Petersburg, so that only the

museum building was left to be destroyed by the cannonade. In spite of its modern houses, and its fifteen thousand inhabitants, it has a lonely appearance, and the troops of dogs that infest its streets give it the semblance of an Oriental town. In the bare hill beyond it, site of the ancient Greek city, excavations are constantly carried on, and many beautiful and interesting relics of that civilization which once flourished on these Scythian shores are brought again to light, — memorials of the time when Anacharsis the Younger walked through its orchards and gardens, and thought it the finest city of the world. In its vicinity was the great tumulus known to the Tartars as the "Hillock of the Brave," which, opened forty years ago, disclosed a chamber of hewn stone, wherein were found the remains of a Scythian chief with his wife, his attendants, and his favorite steed. His golden crown, his ornaments and robes and weapons, with the offerings made at his tomb, were found, untouched, as they had lain since before our era; and now, with similar objects obtained in this region, they adorn the rooms of the Hermitage at St. Petersburg. What a wonderful realm is Russia, since, without quitting the firm land, she can enrich her

museums with the mammoths of the Polar rivers, and the Greek art of Southern seas!

Now we went on board a spacious boat of the Black Sea Line, the *Grand Duchess Olga.* Never was a more varied company assembled than that gathered in its elegant saloons and on its broad decks; — Russians from the interior going to the summer court and watering-place of Yalta, people following French fashions and speaking French or German as readily as Russ; Greek women (one of them lovely as the fairest antique statue) with level eyebrows and abundant hair half concealed by the scarlet cap with its long, drooping tassel, women, all of whom needed only the illumination of the soul to become beautiful, and who looked up with a kind of childish helplessness to their husbands or fathers wrapped in loose garments bordered with fur; natives of the Caucasus in their peculiar costumes, with features so regular that any one of the number might have sat for the typical Caucasian of an illustrated work on ethnology, most distinguished among them a Georgian Prince in the service of the Czar, an Apollo for face and form, with a long tunic of fine yellow cloth, a cap of gray lamb-skin, and belt and cartridge boxes in-

A YOUNG CIRCASSIAN.

laid with silver; Armenian traders sitting apart, handsome as the Caucasians, but with sharp, sad lines in their faces; Jews in their dark robes; Tartars, slow-moving and indifferent; nurses wearing turbans shaped of a bright handkerchief and carrying infants swathed, after the ancient custom, with bands of linen; part of a regiment of soldiers ordered to Yalta, and a nondescript crowd of all the neighboring races, Asiatic and European. One of the Russians was a lady from the province of Kharkov who spoke English and seemed much pleased to meet Americans. "I am going to Odessa," said she. "I always go, once a year, to get the modes, for in the country where I live we have little of fashion. How much I should like to see America! I once made a journey to Paris and London, and sometime, although it is so far, I hope to go to New York. America is the land of Lincoln. Ah, how terrible was the news of his death! For three days I did nothing but walk about my house and say, Lincoln is dead! Lincoln is dead!"

A fresh wind blew through the straits of Yeni Kalé, and the tranquil shallows of the Sea of Azoff

gave place to deeper water, green and covered with spray. As we swept into the Euxine, lo! at our left the mountains of Caucasus dark on the horizon, but fading as we held our course to the southwest. All day the light breeze and cloudless sun of morning attended us, and the shore was just visible on our right. At sunset we reached Kaffa and anchored in its beautiful bay, thinking of the days when it was Theodosia, and Athenian barks thronged its port for corn and honey and slaves. Kaffa has been Russian for more than a hundred years, but in that time most of its Tartar inhabitants have emigrated to Turkey; its mosque, copied from St. Sophia, and the finest in the Crimea, has fallen to decay; and at present it is inferior to Kertch in trade and population. Yet it looks well as seen from the water, with its tall buildings, its picturesque ruined forts, and its line of wind-mills, grotesque against the sky.

Many bales of wool were taken on board here for England; and then, in the cool twilight, we sought the open sea and the Bay of Yalta.

YALTA AND THE CRIMEAN TARTARS.

YALTA AND THE CRIMEAN TARTARS.

And still the Tartar loves the shores
The Euxine washes, and deplores
The glories of his race, gone by!
And often when the east winds sigh —
The winds that warm from Asia blow —
He dreams 'tis the murmur of hosts that go
Forth with Genghis and Timour strong;
And his dark eyes flash, and he hears the song
Of the victors sung where the tent lines glisten,
While, couched on carpets Bokhara wove
For the chiefs that over their pastures rove,
The Khan and his jeweled ladies listen.

But the wind goes by, and a roll of drums
From the fort of the conquering Russian comes;
And their ships sail over the Euxine's foam
And their bells ring clear from tower and dome:
"*It was written in Fate's decree;*" he cries,
"*Allah requite us in Paradise!*"

A ROSY sunrise flushed the sea as we anchored in the Bay of Yalta. Precipitous wooded mountains circle it round, and the town, beginning

at the water's edge, climbs a little way up the slope. It would be a lovely spot anywhere upon earth, but after the steppe it is Paradise. No wonder the Imperial family take the long journey from the cold marshes of St. Petersburg to look upon such scenes and breathe such air. Small boats conveyed the passengers ashore, and as we stepped on to the wharf we saw the soldiers, already disembarked, sitting and standing in groups on the beach, cleaning their guns and adjusting their uniforms preparatory to entering the royal grounds.

As the summer residence of the Czar, a favorite bathing-place, and the centre of traffic in Crimean wine, Yalta is important. During the warm season it is thronged with visitors, and it was with some trouble that we obtained rooms at the Hôtel de Yalta — a rambling old house built round an interior court, with bare floors and ancient furniture, yet delightful to us who, since leaving Kazan, had spent but a single night away from a boat, and that in the station-house at Tzaritsin. One must descend the Volga and the Don to appreciate the luxury of an ample apartment and a bed with two sheets and a white pillow cover.

After breakfast we went in an open carriage,

with three horses abreast and a Tartar driver, across the heights above the town to the Tartar village of Usof upon a hill-side fronting the sea. O the pleasure of that ride! The sky blue as ours, with great fleecy clouds drifting over it; the balmy air lightly stirred by the breeze blowing to shore; below us the Euxine flashing in the sun, and about us the rich vegetation of this favored clime — pines, larches, junipers, cypresses, oaks, and walnuts; vineyards on the southern exposures, and in the valleys the mulberry, the pomegranate, the olive, the laurel, the fig, and sometimes the orange; fields of tobacco; blackberry bushes laden with fruit, and the lavish clematis overrunning the walls.

With a fine instinct for natural beauty the Tartars have everywhere chosen the loveliest sites for their villages. This of Usof clusters in the hollow and clings to the hill-side overlooking the sea, while just beyond it precipitous cliffs rise from the water as if to guard the retreat, and the whole air is filled with the music of dashing wave and spray. It might have been transported from the slopes of Lebanon, so like was it to a Syrian town with its small, flat-roofed houses rising terrace above ter-

race, and its dogs that started up to bark at the strangers.

Here, as elsewhere, the Tartars are a comely race; stout but symmetrical in form, the face broad, the eyes black or bluish-gray with heavy lashes, and the nose often high and aquiline. The dress of the men was half way between that of an Arab and a Russian. The women, shy but unveiled, wore wide trousers and loose upper garments; some were barefoot, others had boots of yellow leather, and all let their hair hang to the waist in fine braids. Rarely have I seen prettier children — plump, grave little creatures in queer caps and frocks, peeping timidly round the corners of the houses as we approached, and then suddenly darting within. Two groups were collected in an open balcony with an old man for a teacher, and from small books before them they chanted together with only less noise than those Vambéry heard in the bazaar of Bokhara.

In an inclosure near one of the houses several men and women were at work making cider; the women first pounding the apples in a large wooden trough after which they were put into a rude press, while the juice was "boiling down" in a

TARTAR BOYS.

large, shallow copper pan over a fire kindled on the ground. The picturesquely attired men and women busy with the fruit; the bright-eyed children playing about; the grain, the apricots, the nuts, the tobacco, the onions and red peppers drying in and around every house, made a scene of rustic plenty and simplicity, charming to behold. One of the young women offered us cider in a wooden bowl; another brought a basket of hazelnuts; and we were free to pick the ripe, delicious berries of the great mulberry trees at the foot of the hill. It was a mode of existence that enchanted me, tired of the artificial, complicated life of the West, and had I followed the impulse of the moment I should have sworn allegiance to the Prophet and taken up my abode in Usof by the sea!

Tartars make up the larger part of the population of the Crimea. The power of their haughty Khans decreased until, nearly a hundred years ago, Sahim, the last of the line, gave up his domains to the Russians, and for this was enticed to Constantinople by the indignant Turks, whose vassal he had been, and put to death. It was one of his luxurious predecessors who, when poisoned by a Greek at

Bender, sent for his musicians that he might fall asleep pleasantly. And now their ancient palace, "Seraglio of Gardens," stands like the Alhambra, a monument of splendor passed away. Many of their mosques are in ruins, while those families among them most rigidly attached to their Faith and their traditions have sought on Turkish soil freedom from Christian rule. Yet those who remain seem content and light-hearted; their bearing is easy and independent; and with the belief that all events are decreed, they resign themselves to their fate. Doubtless in an extreme of trial and mortification they are consoled by that saying of Mohammed's so grateful to their fierce kindred, the Turkomans: "This world is a Prison for Believers and a Paradise for Unbelievers." As a race they take life sunnily, and with their primitive habits, and their trust in destiny, are disposed to idleness; yet they readily endure fatigue and are courageous and true-hearted. They have some manufactures of felts and camel's hair cloth, but most of them are agriculturists or shepherds. Their land is irrigated and often well tilled; and on the steppes they have large herds of sheep and cattle, and by their nomadic instinct can find their way even when the trackless

plains are white with snow. Their favorite food is mutton roasted on skewers, with thin cakes of bread, after the fashion of the East. They delight in fruits, and are enormous consumers of tobacco. Unavoidably they will share the progress of the Empire, and they will perhaps play an important part in its future.

In the warm evening twilight we walked about Yalta. The whole population, on foot or in carriages, thronged the streets, from the Emperor, attired as a private gentleman, to the Tartars in black lamb-skin caps ornamented with colored beads. The music of a military band came from the barracks, and laughter and the hum of voices were heard on every side. Here and there were booths for the sale of fruit, especially the grapes of the country, large white and purple pyramids, delicious for eating, but which have not yet produced superior wines. In the shops were piles of gray-blue lamb-skins from the plains near Kertch — a color peculiar to the Crimea, and said, though I know not how truly, to be owing to a plant upon which the sheep feed.

The varied crowd, the soft air, the mountains,

and the sea won us to prolong our stroll till the pines were dim against the horizon and day had given place to stars. Then we turned back to the hotel in company with a group of Tartars sauntering homewards, — for, like all Mohammedans, they keep early hours, — and the last person we saw on the promenade was the Georgian prince, looking strikingly handsome in an embroidered white tunic and a cap of snowy lamb-skin, which he raised in graceful recognition as we passed him by.

THE CRIMEAN COAST AND ALUPKA.

THE CRIMEAN COAST AND ALUPKA.

Cross but this rocky height, and lo!
A valley rare as Rasselas
Found in the Abyssinian pass,
With warmth and beauty all aglow!
Where for Tartar mosque and royal villa
Is many a shining porphyry pillar,
With marbles for ~~altar~~ arch and floor and stair
Veined with vermilion or amber fair;
And fountains fed by the rills that fall
Cool and clear from the mountain wall.
Where the olive and orange and nectarine
Ripen the sea-side gardens in,
And the winds are sweet as the breeze that sighs
Over the meadows of Paradise!—
Yea, and the Blessed there might crave
Alupka, pride of the cliff and wave!

WHEN the next day's shadows began to slope eastward we left Yalta for the drive across the country to Sevastopol. The September sky was without a cloud, and the warmth of the sun

was lessened by a breeze from the water, producing that perfect temperature in which one is neither conscious of heat nor cold.

Our road lay along the slope of the hills between the heights and the sea. Yalta, with its picturesque church, its back-ground of pines, and its circular bay, soon disappeared. Passing on by pleasant homes we reached, at a little distance, the villa of the Empress — Livadia. It is a handsome structure — warm brown in color, with beautiful grounds descending to the shore — a cheerful, unpretending place, where, if anywhere, it would seem care might be forgotten. On the green sward just beyond the gate, companies of soldiers were dining in the open air, and officers in Circassian costume went to and fro. Beyond, and still between the road and the sea, was the palace of the Grand Duke Michael, and, still further, that of the Grand Duchess Helen; but long reaches of park-like grounds separate them and leave each alone in loveliness and dignity.

It is not solely the royal family who come hither for summer delight. All the coast is dotted with the villas of the noble and the wealthy, while those who cannot keep a permanent residence spend a few

weeks here during the bathing season, and go back, refreshed, to the monotony of the interior.

The Crimean range of mountains begins near Kertch, and following mainly the line of the coast, ends in a bold promontory near Sevastopol. Its highest peak, the "Tent Mountain" of the Tartars, rises more than five thousand feet above the Euxine level, and is a mark for steppe and sea. To the north is a boundless plain with brackish lakes but neither springs nor rivers — a plain where chill winds blow and hot suns beat without barrier or shade to soften their power; and where in a long day's ride you would see only wanderers with their herds, and flocks of solemn storks and eager gulls hovering over the lagoons.

Cross the range to the south, and you are in the paradise of Russia. The air is bland. The trees and fruits have almost a tropical richness and variety. Noble forests, vineyards, and gardens everywhere meet the eye, while streams of pure water flow through the ravines, irrigating the soil and supplying the fountains, and beneath all spreads the Euxine, smooth or ruffled, as the wind may blow. The blue sky, the transparent air, the valleys steeped in light and warmth, the mountains

clear-cut against the horizon, the dark-eyed Moslem villagers, and the tideless sea washing the shores, constantly recalled Syria and the landscapes of Lebanon.

But although the value of land here has greatly increased since the introduction of the vine, its fertility and beauty are still only half developed. The mountains, too, have unknown riches of marbles — some red and white, some of a sienna tint, some dark with lustrous veins — with fissures which earthquakes have made, inviting builders to the quarry. Ah, the stately dwellings they yet shall fashion, and the gardens that shall bloom about them!

Now our road plunged into the shadow of oaks which might have framed a man-of-war, and of walnuts broad-boughed and fragrant as those that line the Barada above Damascus. Then it emerged upon an open slope with the mountains towering above us, and, below, the sea, blue that day as the Mediterranean, and sparkling in the sun. And everywhere, in quiet dells and sheltered nooks, and by the side of a narrow stream that wound its way down the steep, were the rustic houses and villages of the Tartars. One would suppose that on

this high-road across the Crimea they would lose their shyness; but the pretty children fled at our approach, and a woman whom we overtook, a woman who from her attire — full trousers, yellow slippers, hair in tiny braids, and a head-dress ornamented with coins — might have walked out of Nablûs or Ramleh, drew quickly across her face the bright-figured mantle that covered her shoulders, and turned away till we passed by.

We had been for some miles on the domain of Prince Woronzoff — the distinguished Russian noble who has done so much to benefit this region and make known its attractions — and soon we came to Alupka, his sea-side residence, and halted at its comfortable inn.

Palace is a word of indefinite signification. There are royal abodes in Europe, popularly called palaces, which are far less grand and luxurious than many American homes; but this of Alupka deserves the name in its fullest meaning. The mountains here come almost within a stone's throw of the shore. The palace stands upon a bank that slopes to the water, and behind it Aï Petri climbs a thousand feet, broken into bare, picturesque

points which resemble, in miniature, the Needles of the Alps. Square in form and Oriental in style, it is built of a greenish porphyry taken from the adjacent cliff, and is in perfect harmony with the landscape, as are all buildings whose materials are from the quarries peculiar to the region about them. The Finland granite of St. Isaac's is as fine in the dull atmosphere of the North as the shining marble of the Parthenon beneath the brilliant sky of Greece; and, under the Crimean heaven, this pile of olive-tinted stone, warm as the sunbeams and rich as the shadows, rises, a natural feature of the scene.

Between high, winding walls of the same stone overgrown with vines, and not unlike the entrance to Warwick Castle, you approach the house. Before you it stands, beautiful in symmetry of design, and in the delicate carving of its mouldings and ornaments. The encircling grounds are set with walnut and apricot and orange and fig and pomegranate trees; varied with thickets of odorous evergreens, and adorned with blossoming vines and shrubs, and with beds of gorgeous flowers; while through them runs a crystal stream which descends from the hills. Beyond, and a little way up the

slope, — toleration pleasant to behold! — out of the mass of foliage gleams a Tartar mosque, with swelling dome and minaret, where, every day, turning east and west and north and south, the muezzin calls the Faithful to prayer; and above soar the cliffs, — now sharp against the sky, now wreathed with clouds, — and seeming lofty and inaccessible enough to be the haunt of eagles and the inspiration of dreams.

Within all was as rare and striking as without, — a mansion fit for a Russian prince to rear on Moslem soil. A Tartar who seemed, in the absence of the family, to have a certain charge, showed us over it with entire politeness and propriety. The ceilings were of oak, and the mantles and the fountains in the spacious dining-room, — fountains fed by the mountain stream, — of the most elegant native marbles; while the furniture and tapestries were almost wholly Turkish or Persian in pattern and arrangement.

In the library, a noble room at one end of the main building, besides the treasures of Continental learning, there were many English books and periodicals lying within easy reach, with leaves freshly cut as if they had been read and enjoyed. Among

the artistic things scattered about, I particularly remember one of those exquisite paper-weights from Ekaterineburg, — a bunch of cherries of reddest cornelian, with leaves of a green Siberian stone, the branch dropped upon a slab of dark-hued, polished jasper.

But the splendor of the house is on the side fronting the sea. The great windows open upon it, and to the shore you go down by stately stairs, broken into three flights, with erect, sitting, and reclining lions, — the last copied from Canova's in St. Peter's, — at either side of the three broad spaces of the descent. And before you spread its waves, blue and far to the horizon, with white sails here and there, and a fresh breeze blowing landward that may have cooled itself on the precipitous sides of the Balkan or among the snow-covered peaks of the Caucasus.

As we stood upon the terrace and looked above and below, I called to mind the delightful residences we had seen in the Old World, — Eton Hall, with its forest avenues, and the Dee winding through its meadows; Chatsworth in its beauteous valley; Inverary, with its beeches and its highland setting of loch and mountain; the Villa of

Prince Oscar near Christiania, with its wide outlook over green fields and clear fiords and reaches of sombre pines; castles by the Rhine and the Rhone, and palaces beneath Italian skies and in Eastern lands, — and I thought if one were to say to me, "Choose for yourself the rarest of these," I would answer, "Give me Alupka by the Euxine!"

BAIDAR GATE AND VALLEY.

BAIDAR GATE AND VALLEY.

O Baidar Gate! lone Baidar Gate!
What glories by thy portals wait! —
Beyond the pines, wide-boughed and old,
Cliffs such as climb in Alpine hold;
Above, the blue Crimean sky
Where, in still noons, the eagles fly,
And poise as if 'twere bliss to be
Becalmed upon that azure sea!
Below, the Euxine with its sails
Fanned by the cool Caucasian gales;
And, all between, the glen, the glade,
Where Tartar girls their tresses braid,
And slopes where silver streamlets run,
And grapes hang, purple, in the sun.

And when, within the wood-fire's glow,
Fond friends tell tales of long ago,
And each recalls some lovely scene
By mountain pass or meadow green, —

If they shall turn and ask of me,
The rarest glimpse of earth and sea,
I'll say, with memory's joy elate,
"'Tis Baidar Gate! 'tis Baidar Gate!"

IT was another cloudless morning when we left Alupka for Sevastopol.

The mountains now retreated from the sea, and we traversed for some distance a country half valley, half upland, fruitful and pleasant, but less cultivated than that nearer Yalta. The little hamlets of the Tartars were scattered here and there, and we passed many of the men with loads of hay, — their small cattle moving lazily, and their cart-wheels, clumsily made of wood, and without tires, creaking like the water-wheels of Egypt. They like the noise, however, and say only a thief is afraid to make it.

Then we began to ascend, and were soon above valley and upland, with the bare cliffs on our right, and the sea, far below, at our left. The road wound along the mountains, turning with sharp angles and offering at every turn a more commanding view. The air was pure and sweet, and as the sun mounted higher, the dews rose in cloudy vapors and drifted over the cliffs, while eagles sailed

above them in the upper sky, likening them to the misty precipices and eyries of Glencoe.

Steadily climbing, we ascended till at a height of seven hundred feet we reached the summit of the Pass and the Gate of Baidar. This is an ornamental arch of masonry built as a barrier across the road, so that travellers coming from Sevastopol can have no sight of the sea until it bursts upon them as they emerge from the portals.

For some time we had forborne to look back; but now, with great peaks rising about us, we dismounted to enjoy the scene. Lo! at our feet the lovely landscape; and, beyond, the sea — radiant, glorious, losing itself in the distant blue! So cloudless was the sky, so transparent the air, that it seemed as if, with steady gaze, we might discern the shining summits of the Caucasian chain, and catch, in the southwest, the gleam of the minarets of Stamboul! Silent as we stood, looking afar, an eagle wheeled, in low flight, just above us; and the droning songs of Tartars with their teams came up from the valley on the wind. Then we passed under the Gate, and the superb picture became a vision of memory.

Our road now descended into the Vale of Baidar, one of the most charming portions of the Crimea, though with but few inhabitants and little culture. Through it runs the Tchernaia, falling into the sea at Sevastopol. On either side were forests of oak, beech, walnut, alder, and poplar, with wild fruit trees, and many elegant shrubs, among them the juniper and the laurel; while graceful vines — oftenest the clematis — clung to their trunks and drooped from their boughs. Hares and other game abound in this valley, and earlier in the year it is vocal with the songs of nightingales.

It was too late for flowers. Wherever the turf was not shaded it was brown with the sun; but in the spring the region is a garden filled with tulips and scarlet poppies, with thyme and crocuses and wild hyacinths, and many a gay bloom unknown to colder fields.

The forest passed, we came out upon the open vale, and saw before us a dilapidated Tartar village, with the post-station, a low, wooden house, in its midst. Alighting at the door, whose latch lifted with a string, we were ushered through a bare apartment — evidently the common guest-room — into one larger and more comfortable, and which

seemed to be the parlor of the establishment. The uneven floor was spread with a coarse carpet — green paper curtains shaded the windows — and in the extreme corner were several pictures of saints in metallic frames, and beneath them a little table covered with books of devotion. From the side windows the long, narrow kitchen was visible, opening upon an interior court ; its cooking utensils hanging upon nails and its store of crockery displayed in a doorless cupboard. A Tartar woman, with a yellow handkerchief over her head, was busy with the pots and pans ; and beyond were the stables, and men caring for the horses.

Adjoining the "parlor" was a bed-room — the bed round and high with feathers and covered with an elaborate patch-work quilt. Here two comely young girls, daughters of the station-keeper, were busy folding and ironing clothes which looked white and clear as those of the most fastidious New England housekeeper. They wore short skirts and loose sacques of calico ; and while the brown hair of one was closely braided, the other had her lighter locks prisoned in curl-papers ; but, disappearing for a moment, she returned with flowing ringlets and a string of bright beads about her fair neck.

We could speak but few words of Russ, and

they not a word of anything else; yet we grew quite social and they entertained us by their tact and liveliness. They submitted their nicely-starched frills to our inspection, and drew from the clothes-basket under-garments with edgings and letters of their own embroidery. On the table was an old, highly-colored fashion plate, and the elder handed it to me with an air which said, "We, too, know something of the great world." Then, at our request, she took a guitar from its case, at the foot of the bed, and they both sang and played several songs in a simple, pleasing style.

Presently the mother appeared — a woman exactly like her daughters, only stouter and graver — and announced that our lunch was ready. Set upon the small table we found a quaint urn filled with delicious coffee which had been roasted since our arrival, and rich cream with rusks. A few minutes later the carriage was brought to the door, and amid pleasant-sounding Russian farewells we bid the family good-morning.

"Who knows?" we said, as we drove away. "Those frills and edgings may be part of the young girls' wedding trousseau. However it be, may they win what is doubtless the height of their ambition — kindly husbands and stations of their own."

SEVASTOPOL.

SEVASTOPOL.

Over the Dead is a Syrian sky,
And a light wind blows from the Vale of Baidar;
But what care they as they mutely lie —
Column and captain, steed and rider?

Tulips and poppies can never bloom
Dear to their slumber as English daisies;
Nor the nightingale's warble in bowery gloom
Atone for the skylark's rapturous mazes.

Ghostly cities and nameless graves —
This is the sum of the battle's story!
And the wind of Baidar the brown grass waves,
And sighs above them, "Alas for Glory!"

THE plain crossed, we came to a range of hills — the subsiding swells of the Yaïla chain — and toiling slowly up the ascent, reached a high level, the battle-ground of the Crimean war. On our left was Balaklava, its bay just visible through a ravine; on our right the Heights of Inkerman;

Cathcart's Hill covered with graves, and many a spot famous in the story of the time. Few habitations were in sight, and the whole upland, rich but neglected, and encircled by tawny mountains treeless and glowing in the sun, was strikingly like that battle-plain of Palestine — Esdraelon.

The day was declining, and without lingering among its mournful scenes, between bare hills we hastened down the sloping road that led to the town. Many Tartars passed us, stretched at full length upon their empty carts, while the plodding cattle picked their unguided way along the broad, dusty track. Then came a distant glimpse of the sea, and soon we were in the suburbs of the noted stronghold of the Crimea.

Demons of Destruction! What a hideous spectre, a frightful ruin, met our gaze for that which had been Sevastopol — the August City! Long lines of buildings, once lofty structures of stone, now mere shells, roofless, windowless, with shattered columns, or but single walls and foundations, and all scarred and blackened and battered, with heaps of rubbish at their base; the unrivaled harbor deserted, and life and activity only where new dwellings had been reared upon the wreck of

SEVASTOPOL

the old — a sight to make one forever shocked and disgusted at the thought of war! The very sunlight seemed to pale before the desolation; and it was with a sigh of relief that we escaped from the melancholy streets into the hotel.

A quiet day's rest, with stories of the bombardment from our German landlord (one of the few citizens who did not leave the place during the war), and we drove out again to see the burial fields and the scenes of the conflict. We had become a little accustomed to the devastation, and could now see isolated buildings and parts of streets redeemed from the general ruin. Workmen were busy upon a cathedral shrining some eminent officers killed in the siege; and, over the bay, the Russian Monumental Church lifted its cross in memory of the brave.

Sevastopol has a commanding site, and its revival is only a question of time. House by house and square by square the resurrection will go on; and, doubtless, some future day, prouder than ever it will bear the name of the August City and the Stronghold of the Euxine.

Now we came to the high, rolling plain above

the town, sloping on one side to the valley towards Balaklava, and rising, on the other, to the Heights of Inkerman — naked and cleft and brown as the mountains of Moab. The soil is good, but almost the whole extent is a bare, weed-grown waste, with only here and there a dwelling.

On a ridge overlooking the sea is the French Cemetery. It is a square, with uniform, appropriate, handsome tombs along its sides, and a monumental one in the centre, having marble slabs upon which are inscribed the names of the officers of the various regiments there interred. There are walks about, and the unoccupied spaces are filled with plants and flowers. A wall of substantial masonry incloses it, and both this and the avenue through which you approach are shaded by locust-trees. At the entrance is a small, neat house occupied by the keeper, who receives eight hundred dollars a year for caring for the grounds.

But what shall be said of the Burial Places of the English?

After the pomp and circumstance of their coming hither; after the charge of the Light Brigade, and countless deeds of signal valor; after heroic patience under suffering, and at last, for so many,

death in this alien land, it is amazing that the dead should be left to lie, apparently friendless and forgotten. There are perhaps twenty small inclosures scattered about; the principal one surrounded by a low, ordinary wall, with a single poor monument and a few head-stones, but most of its graves without slab or number.

There was neither shrub nor tree to relieve the poverty of the place. The wild flowers had withered long before in the fierce heat, and tiny white snails clung to the dead grass and gave it an appearance of utter neglect and barrenness. Outside these pitiful grounds, the slopes and hollows are dotted with graves which have nothing to distinguish them from the common soil; where the stray cattle may crop the turf, and the roving Gypsy pitch his tent, unmolested. And, for all, the only requiem is the wind moaning over the hill, or perchance the plaintive song of the nightingale; and the only "Decoration Day," when spring with gentle fingers strews the sod with scarlet poppies (how much dearer were the pink-tipped daisies of the fields at home!) and the train of brilliant, evanescent blooms with which she keeps here the carnival of the year!

At the Cemetery — for with this name they dignify the largest of the inclosures — I sought in vain among the burnt grass for a flower. Just as we turned to leave, I found, under the shade of a projecting stone in the wall, a little blossom of almost as deep a color as the purple-black lilies of Palestine — a bloom which might well have sprung from the dust of heroes unremembered.

It lies before me as I write, the leaves darkly dyed, as when it grew beneath the Crimean sky, and with its hue come back the wide, desolate plain; the tawny mountains; the wind rustling the grass over the unknown graves. God grant the mothers and wives and children of those who rest there, truly loved and lamented, may never know how sad and untended is the place of their repose! If England will do nothing worthy of her soldiers, dead, let her rear a pillar among the fast-sinking mounds, and write on its front, Oblivion!

ODESSA.

ODESSA.

Dreaming and looking seaward,
No longer the warders wait,
Guard of the Crescent banner,
Gleaming on tower and gate —
The banner unfurled by the Prophet,
The banner in league with Fate.

Nor boom the guns of the Fortress,
When sunset airs blow free,
While the warriors kneel, as the echoes
Die over steppe and sea —
Kneel and pray that the Moslem,
Lord of the world may be.

Gone are the Turk, and the Crescent,
And the Fortress of Khodja Bey;
And lo! in their place, Odessa,
And the Russ with a grander sway —
The Russ and the Royal Eagle,
That makes of Fate his prey!

FROM the deck of the Odessa steamer we watched the ruined streets and dismantled

forts of Sevastopol sink beneath the waves, while we sped westward over an unruffled sea. At evening the boat lay for an hour off Eupatoria, whose white buildings had a pleasing appearance, as seen from the water. Then her prow was turned from the shore, and we stood west again.

It was noon of the next day when we came to Odessa, the great commercial city of Southern Russia, and, before the rise of Chicago, the largest grain-market in the world. Built on a high limestone bluff, with long piers reaching out to protect the harbor, and a gigantic staircase of stone, supported on arches, and extending from the height to the shore, it looks finely as you approach it from the sea, through the many ships and boats loading and discharging their cargoes.

Originally a Turkish fortress, it was taken by the Russians during the reign of the Empress Catherine, and a town at once begun as a port for the grain regions of the South. From the first it seems to have been energetic and ambitious. It petitioned the Emperor Paul for a grant of armorial bearings; for a free port; and for immunities like those accorded to Revel and Riga; and, as a suggestion of what its trade was to become, it sent him

the rare present of three thousand fine oranges. He received the fruit, but rejected the petition, except as it related to the coat of arms. His successors, however, have granted all; and with their favor and the judicious help and counsel of able men — conspicuous among them the Princes Woronzoff, and the Duke de Richlieu, a French exile, who, for many years, made it his home — it has attained its present size and importance. Its growth would have been more rapid but for the slow, inadequate communication with the surrounding country. The railway now finished to Kiëff, and others which are sure to follow, will fill its granaries and freight its ships with the wealth of the vast interior.

The steppe, in its immediate vicinity, is totally unfit for vegetation. The soil cracks and becomes like stone in the sun, and it is only close to the coast, and by the most assiduous care, that vineyards and gardens are made productive. Fierce storms from the east and southeast sweep over it. In winter it is cold and misty and muddy; in summer hot and choked with dust. At the latter season, when there is neither shade nor coolness to be found in the city, all the wealthy people leave

for their sea-side villas, or the watering-places of the Crimea. The handsomest street fronts the sea, with the Exchange at one end, the Woronzoff mansion at the other, and the largest hotel, the Hôtel de Londres, in the middle. There we took up our temporary abode.

Ever since its foundation Odessa has been a rendezvous for all races and professions. Not in the bazaars of Constantinople will one hear a greater variety of languages than among the hundred and fifty thousand people here assembled. For commercial purposes, as in the cities of the Levant, Italian is chiefly employed. The buildings are of stone, and the streets are in process of paving by an English company. Fresh water is brought from without, into the city, and filtered sea-water is used for many purposes. Fuel, also, is obtained from a distance, the barren steppe producing neither wood nor coal.

It was still midsummer weather. During the heat of the day the city reposed, but the mornings and evenings were full of life and business. I did not wonder when I saw the fine shops with elaborate painted signs, and as much French as Russ in the inscriptions, that the lady from the interior

came here for "the modes." Most of the elegancies of Paris could be purchased in them, but at enhanced prices. In the Greek and Armenian bazaars the East was as well represented. Here were the gold and silver work of Tiflis — the belts, the brooches, and the earrings; the embroidered jackets of Circassia; the silks and tissues of Broussa and Adrianople; the slippers of Teheran, and even the shawls of Bokhara; and whatever of rarity the Sultan's capital could send to its northern neighbor.

Each class of inhabitants — nobles, merchants, Jews — has its own quarter and place of meeting. The only common ground seemed to be the cafés, which were filled with a varied crowd, smoking, talking, and sipping wines and coffee. Fruit shops abounded, with great heaps of melons at the doors, and, in some, pears which exactly resembled small, variegated squashes.

One day, towards evening, we rode through and about the city, and noticed with interest that many customs and fashions, such as the mode of harnessing horses, and the dress of coachmen, which had seemed so novel to us when we first stepped upon Russian soil at Abo, Finland, were just the same here in the extreme South. The dust rose in

clouds at every turn of the wheels, and the acacias which with great pains have been planted along the wide, regular streets, were often as brown with it as the pavement. Nothing escaped its defilement but the church-towers, lifted above its ashen clouds.

And how fine are some of these towers! Critics may say what they will of Russian Church architecture — call it "debased Byzantine," "Tartaresque," or any other reproachful name which suits their whim — to my eye it is always pleasing and often very beautiful. Have the orders and styles of past ages exhausted the capabilities of form? Are changes and combinations necessarily monstrosities? "Debased," indeed! I wish every city in America had a church as imposing as one we saw, scarcely finished, on the outskirts of the town, its lofty tower upholding a graceful, swelling dome that seemed poised as lightly and naturally as a golden lily on its stem! And, more than domes and towers, I wish that from our churches as from those of Russia, pews were excluded, and the space within were free to the lowest as to the highest, to the beggar as to the millionaire — all equal in the presence of God. Then the sermon would be less, but the worship of the united con-

gregation more, and the poor, who have greatest need of beauty and cheer, would not be banished from our finest churches as, in effect, they are now.

Next to the churches, the most prominent buildings were the great stone granaries, and the slaughter-houses, where countless cattle — the gray herds of the steppe — are converted into tallow. On the outskirts were numerous small, rude dwellings, the abodes of the peasants who have flocked here to better their fortunes; and in an open space was a Gypsy encampment. The men were doubtless plying their various trades and arts within the city; but the women and children hung about the tents, clothed in dirt and rags, yet some of them noticeably handsome, with lithe, slender forms, and an untamable look in their black eyes, fascinating, yet fearful to behold.

Just where the town met the steppe, we came upon a long line of carts from the far country, filled with wheat for the market. It was a characteristic and interesting sight, for formerly all the grain was brought to town in this way. The carts were similar to those of the Tartars, wholly of wood, without tire or nail. Each held perhaps twenty-five

bushels of wheat, and was drawn by two oxen, gray, small, slow-moving cattle, attached to it by a harness of ropes. The axles would get on fire with the constant friction, were it not for frequent use of the vile grease carried in a little pot hanging beneath.

But how shall I describe the men walking by the teams? Never before had I so vivid an idea of a serf. Their faces were as dull as those of the bullocks they drove, and they moved in the same lethargic way. They seemed to be rather fair of hair and complexion, but were so begrimed with dust it was difficult to tell. Some were bareheaded, and all wore blouse and trousers of coarsest sacking, fastened about the middle with a rope or a strap of leather. Gloomily stupid, they looked as if they had never had an emotion in their lives. They had come, perhaps from the borders of Poland, perhaps from Kiëff, for then the railway thither was unfinished. We looked after them as they plodded on, and commiserated their lot. Born of ancestors equally degraded, they had had nothing to waken thought or hope or ambition. The grain they carried was not their own, but belonged to some landed proprietor who would pay them a

mere pittance for the journey. They had travelled ten or twelve miles a day and then halted; and while their cattle ate the grass by the road-side, they had made a meal of buckwheat porridge or rye bread, — for wheat they seldom taste, — and then slept under their carts. It was one of this class to whom Prince Demidoff refers in his account of travel through this region — a man ill, and without aid, in whose hut he sought refuge from a storm. "Ah!" said the uncomplaining sufferer, when his visitor expressed pity for his condition, "peasants were not sent into this world for their own pleasure."

Thank God! the day of pleasure for peasants is coming! The Czar has made them free men, and with the knowledge of their manhood their dormant faculties will awake. The elder men of this generation will not greatly change; but their children will have education and gain wealth and power. They will send their own wheat to Odessa, and eat of the best of the land at home, and tales of the days of servitude will seem as far off as if they had been in another world!

Twilight was deepening as we returned to the hotel. It was the "Name's day" of the Czar —

the festival day of Saint Alexander Nevski, whose name he bears, — and the principal streets and buildings were brilliantly illuminated. The Exchange presented a beautiful appearance, with a motto in Russ blazing upon its front, and, beneath, the Emperor's cipher surmounted by a crown, and encircled with flame. The harvest moon shone over the sea; the streets were filled with merry people; and, remembering the uplifting of the nation, we could have exclaimed as heartily as any Russian of them all, "Honor and long life to the Czar!"

OVER THE STEPPE TO KICHINEFF

OVER THE STEPPE TO KICHINEFF.

Hush! heard you that horseman? how madly he rides!
God pity the woman his coming that bides!
Wild oaths wafted up on the wind as he passed,
And a shade o'er the moonlight that moment was cast.

What stirs there? No bugle the barracks have blown;
No drum beats to quarters; yet, watching alone,
While the howl of the dogs fills the midnight with fear,
Some foe stealing by in the darkness, I hear.

Has the Turk crossed the border? the Tartar come back
With the vengeance of murder and fire in his track?
There 's a foot by the window; a flame on the floor; —
And lo! 'twas the wind and the moonbeam — no more.

FAREWELL to the sea. Our course was now across the country to the Austrian frontier.

It was a fine morning in mid-September when we left Odessa by railway for Tirsopol, ninety miles distant, the farthest point to the west touched by the then unfinished road to Kiëff.

As soon as we had passed the town we entered upon the bare rolling plain burnt with the heat so as to be almost a desert in appearance, but which improved as we advanced till the soil looked dark and rich like that of our prairies. Occasional villages of small houses with a large church in their midst; immense quantities of hay stacked on the plains, and of straw, showing where grain had been threshed; groups of wind-mills on the higher swells of land, and the dwellings of the railway workmen near the track, half under ground so that at a distance they seemed to be all roof; these were the most striking features of the country between Odessa and Tirsopol, where we arrived at a little past one;—Tirsopol on the Dneister, which has a citadel to command the course of the river, and is one of the chief towns of Bessarabia.

In Odessa we had secured an order for post-horses, and a comfortable carriage which came up with us on the train, and while the courier went to the post-house to make the necessary arrangements, we waited, at the railway station, and lunched, after the fashion of the country, on bread and tea. The great room was crowded with those who had just arrived and those who were to take the train

a few hours later; for time had not yet become valuable here, and the railway was an object of curious interest to all. Companies of cartmen, such as we had seen near Odessa, and who had brought their grain to the station instead of taking the long journey to the port, peered in at the doors or walked about, examining the track and the cars. Polish Jews, with black robes and curling earlocks, stood talking apart. A peasant father and mother sat in one corner, shy and observant, surrounded by their luggage in queer bags and bundles, and were very much disturbed because their children — three sturdy little boys with cropped hair and droll jackets covered with buttons — dared to run about and make a noise. Opposite them were an old and a young lady, evidently people of "quality," dressed in the Paris fashions of perhaps twenty years ago, and served by an obsequious maid whose attire was at least a quarter of a century behind their own. Tartar workmen were continually going through, leaving wide-open doors which the boys amused themselves, in spite of their mother, by shutting with a slam; and in the middle of the room, undisturbed by the commotion, sat an Armenian with a shining black port-

manteau by his side, and paper and pencil in his hand, doubtless summing up the gains of his last trading adventure. Near the door stood an open cask of fresh water with a long-handled wooden dipper floating on the top, and almost all who went in or out stopped to drink of it — the small boys taking such frequent and copious draughts that at length their father, overcoming his timidity, rose and dragging them away, ranged them in a forlorn row against the wall.

These things entertained us until the carriage was brought to the door, with four horses harnessed abreast and furnished with bells, and a Tartar driver. We set off at a furious gallop; and what with the speed and the clouds of dust that enveloped us, we hardly had a glimpse of the town before it was left behind and we were on the great post-road, the thoroughfare across the steppe from the Black Sea to Poland.

From eight to ten miles an hour is the ordinary rate of travel here. Then the station is reached and both horses and driver are changed. The number of miles, or versts, from one station to the next is marked on posts set up by the way-side and painted with the Imperial colors; and often, so

level is the steppe, several of these posts are in view at once. There are no roads worthy of the name except these Government highways, and over them all the traffic and travel of the country must pass. At intervals we met carts filled with grain going to the town or returning after discharging their loads, the drivers counterparts of those we had previously seen. Great herds of cattle, and of sheep, both black and white, fed about; windmills were common; and, as we went on, fields of Indian corn, pleasant to American eyes, varied the monotony of the broad level.

Its monotony — and yet the steppe is not without picturesque and striking features. Here, when the sun rises and disturbs the brooding mists, the forests and cities of the mirage shine along the horizon; and his setting is often with such marshaling of clouds and splendor of colors as the hills never know. Here, too, are those strange monuments of forgotten ages, the funereal Mounds — the Khourgans of the Tartars — reared and consecrated by a race long passed away; up whose sides the shepherds climb to see their flocks, and, wrapped in their rude capotes, sleep, or drowsily watch the dark lines upon the silent plain. We

saw them at intervals, all the way from Odessa to the frontier — low, rounded banks dark against the sky — mysterious relics which neither the violence nor the storms of centuries have been able to destroy.

The sun set in crimson glory, and the full moon rose, yellow, in the east. The evening was so pleasant that we concluded to prolong our journey to Kichineff, the capital of Bessarabia. A cool wind came with the dew, and we went rapidly on over an undulating country which at length became almost hilly, so that for the last stage we had six horses and a postillion. The custom here is to drive very fast up hill and very slow down. At every little declivity a post was seen bearing a board with a brake painted upon it, black on a white ground.

It was nearly ten o'clock when we reached Kichineff and whirled through the wide streets to what the driver assured us was its best hotel. O, Frequenters of the "Clarendon" and the "Continental!" what would you have said to the inn of the Bessarabian capital? — a broad, low, white-washed house at the back of a paved yard, with the interior roughly finished — a few battered arti-

cles of furniture that looked as if for generations they might have been heir-looms in the owner's family — the long, empty room into which we were ushered lighted by a tallow candle set on a narrow mantel near the ceiling — and the inmates, from the host to the stable-boy, running about; opening and shutting doors; issuing orders in various unknown tongues; and at length bringing in the tea-urn and placing it, with meat and bread, upon the table before us.

Our bed-rooms — just beyond, upon the first floor, with small windows but a few feet from the ground — were barer and plainer than the large apartment. The town was full of dogs, barking and howling like their kind at Constantinople. Now and then a horseman clattered down the street. Some servants' brawl or a riotous arrival kept up a tumult in the yard; and the whole was so like an adventure in a story-book that it was long before I fell asleep. Then it was to wake and see if the clumsy stool was just where I had placed it, against the door; and to question if the light on the wall was really nothing but the moon shining through the dim panes of the uncurtained window.

We rose early, hoping to leave before the sun

was high, but in this we had reckoned without our host. The people appeared kind and willing to do everything in their power, but they had neither method nor sense of time. What a waking up there will be in that hotel, and in all Kichineff, when the railway train thunders through and traveller and native must be at the station to meet it! Before six o'clock the cloth was laid in the large room for our breakfast. It was after eight when we sat down to the table. And all this time the waiter had been hurrying back and forth, bringing now a plate, now a knife and fork, now a cup of salt, and at each entrance he assured us that breakfast would be in "directly." One of our party asked for water-cresses; whereupon landlord and waiter held a serious consultation which resulted in dispatching a boy to the market. Just as we were leaving the table he burst in with a flushed, triumphant face, holding high a small bunch of the fresh leaves — proof of what determination can do even in Kichineff.

At nine o'clock we drove out of the hotel yard, eager to view the capital and its ninety thousand inhabitants.

KICHINEFF TO BELZI.

KICHINEFF TO BELZI.

Here the white cattle graze that feed
The Austrian Kaiser's towns,
Close-watched by dogs alert to leap
If but the herder frowns;
And here the shepherd tends his flock
While the long days go by —
Now couched beside them in the plain,
Now on the khourgans high.
The plover calls across the steppe;
The stork, with snowy breast,
Flies northward to the kindly roof
That holds her summer nest;
But nothing stirs his drowsy blood
Unless a lamb should stray —
Then woe to wolf or Gypsy thief
That lurks beside the way.

WHAT did we see? A vast town spread over uneven, almost hilly ground; its wide streets lined with shabby, thatched-roofed huts, and large, handsome buildings here and there — the cathedral,

the residence of the Russo-Greek Bishop, barracks and other modern structures pertaining to the Russian rule — with walls brilliantly white, and domes and roofs painted green ; bazaars open to the street and full of all the common things required by such a population — boots, blouses, gay handkerchiefs, ropes, twine, coarse woolens and linens, and rude implements for the house and the field; in the market, grapes, melons, apricots, pears, apples, and women sitting on the ground by a few vegetables, as in the East; aged crones, crouching in the doors, spinning from a distaff; groups of dirty-looking children, clad, like some of the women, in a single garment of hempen cloth; soldiers in shining uniforms; Tartars wearing lambskin caps, coming and going with ox-teams loaded with hay and grain, and always lying at full length upon the empty carts ; lean, savage dogs running about; such was Kichineff — an Arab town dropped in Russia.

On the outskirts of the place women were standing up to their knees in a pool of water, washing flax, while others were spreading it in the sun. Flax is one of the chief products of the country, and most of the clothing of the inhabitants, at least of the peasantry, is of home manufacture. There

WINDMILL OF THE GRAIN REGION.

were vineyards on the slopes and some of the hills were wooded.

The uneven country about the small tributary of the Dneister on which Kichineff is built, soon subsided into the steppe which is here very fertile and, in its season, the birth-place of beautiful flowers, coming and going like those of our prairies; and the haunt of cranes, plovers, and other free-winged tribes that love rich and boundless fields. No stones or rocks were seen; no fences divided the domains. Solitary dwellings were rare, even near the highway. The post-stations were in villages or had a few habitations gathered about them. They were low houses, the interiors poorly finished with wood, but the ceilings almost always painted in colors with some simple pattern, while the roofs were the universal thatch of coarse reeds or straw. In all the towns were wind-mills, and wells with long sweeps and buckets.

Many of the inhabitants of this part of Bessarabia are Tartars. So far from the sea, they did not emigrate when the country was ceded to Russia, as did multitudes on its borders; but away from any centre of their Faith, and with the Greek church dominant, they are likely to grow yearly more lax

in the observance of their creed. The remainder are Russians, Jews, and representatives of all the neighbor races.

The principal industry is the rearing of sheep and cattle; indeed, Bessarabia is a grazing ground to which herds are often sent from afar. It supplies Austria with numerous cattle and cavalry horses, and sends great droves to the Odessa market. Some of the proprietors have a hundred thousand sheep. These are of a hardy breed, the fine merinos having been found unprofitable on account of the long housing they require in winter. Nothing is used to enrich the land, but it is customary to let it lie fallow every third year. The common fuel is dung mixed with chopped straw, and dried in the sun.

Beyond Kichineff the country continued more undulating than that to the southeast. Occasionally we passed forest-clothed ridges with bright points of autumnal color gleaming in the green. Stretches of Indian corn alternated with levels covered with stacks of hay. Great companies of cattle fed in the open spaces and unoccupied fields, and sometimes passed us on the road, driven by

mounted herders, and raising such a storm of dust that we could hardly see them, or even breathe till they had gone by.

At Orgeief, a town on the brink of a smooth expanse like a New England meadow, we stopped for dinner. Entering the inn by a flight of steep stairs, we sat down in its one large room to wait for the promised cutlets and tea. Everywhere along the route we found poor, ill-matched crockery in use, but here its variety was remarkable, and we had nothing to do but to watch the waiter at his work. On a small, square table there were pink plates and blue plates; a black and white sugar-bowl; a purple milk-pitcher; and cups and saucers of every color possible to coarse earthenware. It was plain that contrast was what the waiter desired. He never put brown cups and saucers together, but always mated them with red or green, and when he had set them out in a half-circle, folding his arms he stood at a little distance and contemplated the rainbow effect with entire satisfaction. I was sorry not to be able to speak to him. I wanted to ask on what occult principle of taste he proceeded, and where the landlord got such an astonishing collection. But alas! we had not a word in common,

and the history of that dinner-set I shall never know.

All the afternoon a rolling country; a wide, dusty road; and corn and hay and cattle. At five o'clock we came to the station at the little hamlet of Baretchsky and found that the stables were empty, and we must wait for horses to come in and feed before we could go on. On either side of the post-house were several small, thatched dwellings, half sunk in the ground, and before it the plain sloped to a narrow river. A man clad in the universal blouse and trousers of tow-cloth lazily led away the horses, and as lazily returned with a pot of offensive grease which he applied to the carriage-wheels with his fingers, wiping them, as he passed back into the stable yard, on a horse's tail! Little children were playing about with only a tow shirt on, while the boys above seven or eight years old were habited exactly like the men. The dust lay on the ground like a bed of fine ashes, and the children were striking it with a stick and making it fly high in the air; and playing with tame turkeys, and pigeons with feathered legs — both so brown with dust that it was impossible to tell the color of their plumage.

A peddler came trudging up the road with his pack on his back, and his arrival made quite an excitement among the women. They appeared at the cellar-like doors of the houses, and, with wha seemed like words of welcome, invited him to enter. He was apparently an Armenian, and a shrewd, good-humored fellow to whom bargaining was second nature. Nodding graciously, and saying something equivalent, I fancy, to "all in good time, ladies," he vanished under the first doorway.

As we walked about, the mistress of the adjoining house which was thatched and low, but, unlike the rest, entirely above ground, smiled and beckoned us to come in. She had a fair complexion with sunny blue eyes, and her dress was a dark woolen petticoat, with a short linen wrapper and silver earrings. Entering, we found a large room with a degree of comfort which we had not expected. In one corner was a broad, covered bench, on which quilts were piled, and which served for a bed. There were wooden stools and a table; a coarse rug was spread on the floor, and at the farther end was a fireplace over which kettles and a few dishes were set with some regard to order.

But the attraction of the place, and that which

the proud young mother had called us to see, was a tiny baby asleep in his liulka, — a cradle like a light wooden tray, suspended by lists from the ceiling. As if he had been a prince she lifted the blanket that we might see his face, and rocked his hanging nest gently to and fro when he moved with a faint cry. It was the Bessarabian poem of "Philip, my king!"

In came the peddler, followed by three or four women eager to trade. With an air as bland and patronizing as that of his Scotch brother delineated by Wilkie, he helped himself to a stool, and proceeded leisurely to unfold his treasures, — bright handkerchiefs; necklaces of glass and coral beads; earrings; rolls of chintz and ribbon; and a dozen other things charming to feminine beholders, Christian or Mohammedan. The blue-eyed woman fixed, at once, upon a string of beads for her baby, and began to bargain for it, holding it on her fingers; while the rest picked up each article as he laid it down, and admired and questioned and discussed until there was such a noise and excitement in the low room that, with a trifling gift to the mother for baby's necklace, we slipped away.

The sun was setting in gorgeous clouds, and the

whole plain shone with a momentary splendor This was the hour for watering the herds. Bellowing and filling the air with dust; driven by men on horseback carrying heavy whips, and by fierce dogs that with bark and bite at once seized upon a stray ox and forced him back into the drove, across the fields they went to the river; a moving mass of gray; crowding past each other in their haste; plunging to the bank with wild eyes and flaring nostrils, and drinking as if they would drain the stream to its source.

Meanwhile the expected horses had returned; and at eight o'clock, with no supper but some meat and bread we had brought in a basket from Orgeief, we resumed our journey.

Again a cool, dewy evening, and the harvest moon undimmed by a cloud. We went on without incident and reached the next station a little before ten o'clock, meaning to spend the night; but there was no inn, and the post-house had only hard benches and black bread to offer us, so we resolved to prolong our ride to Belzi, the largest town that remained between us and the frontier. At eleven o'clock we were off with a fresh team, and a driver wrapped in sheep-skins against the night air. At

that hour the country was still, and seemed almost uninhabited. There were neither herds nor travellers to obstruct the road, and it was not long after midnight when we reached Belzi and alighted at the door of its Armenian inn. Disrobing at night does not seem to be the fashion in Bessarabia. We found the people asleep, but in their usual dress, and ready, as soon as they were waked, to serve us. There was a hospitality in their greeting very grateful to tired, chilled, belated comers. In a little while they gave us tea, and made up clean beds for us on their straw-cushioned sofas, where, oblivious of dogs and all other disturbances, we slept soundly till late the next morning.

THE FRONTIER.

THE FRONTIER.

O the glorious purple line
  Of the mountains lifted along the west!
Bright, in the sun, their summits shine;
  Dark, in the shade, their valleys rest.
Cossack and Tartar may hold the plains,
  And the rivers that creep to a tideless sea;
Mine be the heights where the eagle reigns,
  And cataracts thunder, and winds blow free!

Not for the steppe, with its desert sheen,
  From Austria's border to China's wall,
Would I give the upland pasture's green —
  The beech-tree's shadow — the brooklet's fall.
Vanish, O weary, mournful Level!
  Welcome, O Wind my brow that fans!
In the splendor of earth again I revel,
  Greeting the purple Carpathians!

WE let Belzi take its own time. It was ten o'clock when we left the inn, our lunch-basket filled with meat and bread against the exi-

gencies of the day. Belzi lies in a low plain surrounded by hills, and is like Kichineff in appearance, only smaller and poorer.

Still a rolling country with corn, and hay, and cattle. At one place we counted nearly a hundred cows feeding together by the road-side. All day the monumental mounds were seen lying along the horizon, to the south. Most of the people we met appeared to be of Tartar race, and the women, though always with uncovered faces, seemed shy and timid. At one place, where we waited for horses, we saw several at work with flax which lay, as about most of the houses, in bundles upon the roof, and on the grass, near at hand. Standing at a little distance, we watched them with interest; but as soon as they saw they were observed, they fled into the house, and immediately two men came out, attended by a huge dog, and confronted us with angry looks and warning gestures, so that we were glad when the carriage came to take us from their disagreeable neighborhood.

Now and then we passed stubble fields where wheat had grown. The corn raised here is little exported, but, ground into coarse meal and cooked as porridge, it is a staple article of food for the inhabitants.

PEASANT OF THE POLISH BORDER.

As we journeyed north the air became perceptibly cooler. The country was more broken, and in the hollows of the hills were little lakes that gave variety to the landscape. In the afternoon, at a lonely post-station, we waited again for horses, and, to pass the time, walked back to the stable-yard. It was surrounded by a high fence, a kind of stockade. Surly dogs followed the grooms about, and the entire establishment had a dreary, prison-like appearance. The apartments of the keeper are always in the rear of the house, looking upon the yard. The doors were open, and as we went by we saw the two forlorn rooms where eight or ten people had their abode. In one a small fire of brushwood burned in the chimney with a pot hanging over it in which porridge was cooking; while a baby, rolled in a bit of brown flannel, — a bright-eyed little thing crowing at the flame, — lay on a cushion near by. A pile of bedding and clothing in one corner, two or three rough benches, a few wooden dishes and a tea urn made up the furniture.

Seeking for something more agreeable than this barren place, we went a little way up the road to where a field of Indian corn rustled in the wind, and I could not resist the temptation to pluck an

ear and taste the sweet, yellow kernels so suggestive of home. Truly, beauty is everywhere, even under the shadow of a Bessarabian post-house. Growing on the edge of the corn-field were clusters of golden immortelles, and delicate purple flowers which I had never seen elsewhere.

There was no large village with an inn where we could comfortably spend the night, so again we rode until a late hour, and then halted at a station whose hard, leather-covered benches made sitting up or walking about preferable to lying down. We were off with the dawn, having first, outside the door, washed our faces after the Oriental manner, with water poured from a dipper into the hands.

The morning was cool and clear like those of New England in late September, and we soon accomplished the fifteen miles to the next station. There an old woman, wrapped in a sheep-skin coat, admitted us and furnished us with an urn for making tea and a small bowl in which to drink it, and with much merriment we breakfasted upon what remained of the lunch we had brought from Belzi. Just as we drove away from the house we saw, by the side of the road, a wagoner who was making a pudding of corn meal in an iron pot, over a fire

kindled on the ground. His cart was close at hand and beyond it his oxen were feeding. Having made his pudding very stiff, he poured it out into a cloth spread on the grass and tied it up for carrying. Then with his wooden spoon he scraped the pot, eating the morsels, and was still intent upon it when a turn in the road hid him from our view.

Through this region, most of the houses were thatched, and great herds of sheep and cattle were common; but it was soon evident that we were coming into a more populous country, and among a different people. We passed numerous carts filled with grain and vegetables and melons, sometimes driven by men, sometimes by women. Companies of three or four were walking, carrying fowls under their arms, or having a bag of striped cloth over their shoulders, containing something to sell. The dress of the women was a long-sleeved garment of coarse white linen, reaching just below the knees. It was quite open at the neck, and about the hems and bands there was an ornamental stitch of colored worsteds. Instead of a petticoat, a striped woolen blanket, perhaps two yards in length and half as much in breadth, was folded round the figure,

beginning under the right arm and ending under the left — a single thickness at the back, and double in front. A sash or belt of ornamented leather confined it at the waist, and the outer lower corner, with careless grace, was caught up to the belt again. On the head was a high covering of white linen, somewhat resembling that worn by the women of Bethlehem, and earrings and a necklace of beads or coins completed the attire. With their bare, brown, well-shaped legs and feet; their white teeth, bright eyes, free motions, and neat, effective dress, they made very pleasing, picturesque groups. The men, clad in homespun linen, and perhaps with a sheep-skin jacket over the blouse, were as tidy as the women. These were the Moldavians of the border.

The country became more broken and wooded; the peasant travellers more numerous; and lo! we were at Novoselitza and the Frontier!

The unusual stir among the inhabitants was soon explained. It was fair and market-day in the town, and several thousand people were assembled on the green. Making our way through their midst, we alighted at the hotel. It was an ill-constructed, unfurnished building, but after the small, comfortless

post-houses with their wretched fare, its high sunny rooms were palatial, and we thought its rusks and coffee delicious, although they did bring us the boiled milk in an iron kettle and set it on the floor beside the table.

While our passports were being copied we walked out to see the fair. The majority of the people were the same in dress and appearance as those we had passed on the way. Piled up on the ground, or exposed in booths and on benches, were vegetables, melons, butter and curds, pottery, wooden dishes, rock salt, linen and woolen cloths of home weaving, colored yarns, beads, belts, sashes, and whatever else was produced or required by this primitive people. All seemed good-humored over their traffic, and it was evident that many a flirtation was going on among the young men and maidens whose eyes and costumes had perhaps come down to them from the ancient Dacians.

The last arrangements were completed; our passports were returned to us; the courier announced that all was in readiness for our departure. Half glad and half sorry, we took the carriage once more, and, crossing the barriers between the guard-houses of the two nations, entered Galicia and Austria.

A charming ride across the Bukovina — the "Beech country" — with the Carpathians in sight to the southwest (how enchanting was their wavy line after the long level of the steppes!); the passage of the Pruth; the ascent of the hill to picturesque Czernowitz, whose Latin crosses glittered in the sun; and at the door of the "Hôtel Adler" we stepped from the vehicle which had conveyed us so far, and dismissing the driver, bid a last farewell to Russia.

THE CZAR

THE CZAR.

Now who is he with lofty mien
That down the street doth ride? —
Nor bugle's note, nor banner's sheen,
To tell of power or pride.

His brow no kingly crown displays;
His breast no jeweled star;
Yet Russ and Tartar reverent gaze —
The Czar! God save the Czar!

IT was at Yalta that, for the first time in his own dominions, we saw the Czar — a man whose stately beauty would make him anywhere a mark for admiration, and whose noble career as Emperor entitles him to the world's regard. In his appearance there is nothing of the fierce assumption of superiority which belongs to his uncle, the sovereign of Prussia, nor yet of the unbending hauteur by which all the portraits of the Emperor Nicholas are characterized; but rather dignity allied to a

tender earnestness which becomes him as the Father of his People.

Think of his position! A monarch with almost irresponsible power over seventy millions of men; whose words echo as law from the Frozen Cape to Mount Ararat, and from the Carpathians to the Sea of Japan; and on whose individual will, more than on that of any other man, hang the destinies of the race.

With the clear thought and steady purpose of his German blood, and the faith which inheres in the Slavonic, he applied himself to his tasks. Doubtless during the dark days of the Crimean war the pain and peril of Russia had sunk into his heart, and when he came to rule over the waiting millions it was with sympathy for their trials, with appreciation of their needs and difficulties, and with the resolve, God helping him, to lighten their burdens. He knew the time was ripe for the victories of peace, and that the age demands kingliness of kings. The Empress, of the Ducal House of Hesse-Darmstadt, with an exalted standard for the court and the nation, was his unfailing support and adviser. He gathered about him the ablest men of the land, and consulted with them as to the great measure he

proposed — the Freedom of the Serfs. A thousand obstacles intervened through the bitter opposition of a part of the aristocracy, but quietly and firmly ne met and overcame them. Five years after his accession he proclaimed the Act of Emancipation — glorious deed which converted thirty millions of chattels into men! And each one of them received it as joyfully and as personally as if he had taken him by the hand and said, "To you, Ivan," or "To you, Fedor, I give the right to be your own lord and master; to marry, to possess land, to trade, and to come and go as may suit your interest and desire." Thus he has intensified, a hundredfold, the instinctive worship of the Russian for his Czar; he has given to each peasant the devotion of a Komisaroff; and made the new hope and courage and manhood he has inspired the surest foundation for his throne in peace, and its mightiest bulwark in war.

To this event succeeded others only less important. Desirable changes were initiated in ecclesiastical matters. Foundations were laid for a system of universal education. Open courts with trials by jury were instituted. Provincial assemblies were established. The bribery and corruption of the

civil service were checked, and the petty espionage which had often marked it was discountenanced.

Everything has been done to foster and facilitate the trade of the Empire. Nearly ten thousand miles of railway have been finished or are now building, carrying life and progress into remote districts; bringing the mines and the grain regions near to the great marts; and binding together the different governments with the strong bond of common interests.

Travelling through an unexplored country, the pioneer must clear his way as he proceeds. He cannot always choose at once the most desirable path, because he must fell the trees in order to see what lies beyond; he must ford the streams to tell where it is safest to cross; he must climb the hills to learn which summit slopes gentlest to the farther plain. So the Czar, with such untried forces to measure and control, such impediments to remove, and such diverse and jarring interests to consult, must often have walked in uncertainty, and found deviations and apparent retrogressions inevitable. But "Forward!" is blazoned on his banner, and those who understand him best know that difficulties only incite him to fresh endeavors.

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~~THE CZAR.~~

Alexander II.

"Best of husbands and fathers," is a remark one often hears made of the Czar in Russia. He has five sons living — Alexander, the heir; Vladimir, Alexis, Sergie, and Paul; and one daughter, Marie, now seventeen years of age. Alexis, soon to be our welcome, honored guest, bears the name of the father of Peter the Great, the second sovereign of the Romanoff line. His position is that of lieutenant in the navy, and the highest place to which he can probably ever attain will be that of General Admiral, now held by his uncle, the Grand Duke Constantine.

One of the most impressive services of the Russian Church is that where the priest, followed by his deacons and readers, all in gorgeous robes, issues from the royal doors, and, advancing to the centre of the church, intones a solemn prayer for the safety and well-being of the Emperor, while the choir take up the last words and chant them to a noble strain. Let every soul throughout his dominions echo that prayer — the Muscovite of varying Faith; the Tartar in his mosque; the Georgian under the shadow of Kasbek; the Kirghiz and Kalmuck in their felt-covered tents; the Ostiak and the Samoiede by northern seas; nay, the Pole beneath

the glitter of the Latin cross — for, so far as human power can avail, the safety of the Emperor means security and justice and progress for all.

Humanity is one. We also, of the Republic over the sea, honor the name and pray for the preservation of the Czar Alexander.

Hail to the Czar Alexander!
Hail to the Prince of the Free!
Not to the proud would he pander;
Truer and nobler and grander
Than Macedon's hero is he,
Alexander!

Listen! how melodies rural
Freight every wind with his praise!
Give him the golden crown mural! —
First from the seas to the Oural
Liberty's flag to upraise,
Alexander!

Greatest is not the Czar Peter;
(Sound it, O Bells, from each steeple!)
No, for his fame will be fleeter;
No, for the homage is sweeter
Paid to the Czar of the People,
Alexander!

Ah! when the Muscovite story
Ages to ages shall tell,
Still will the patriarchs hoary
Cry, "'twas the Czar of our glory,
He who loved Russians so well,
Alexander!"

God be his shield and defender!
Keep him from sorrow afar!
Then, when his life he shall render,
Fold in eternity's splendor
Russia's redeemer, the Czar
Alexander!

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